

PURPLE & ORANGE



CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Episode Guide.....	3
Colonel Lyra's Log.....	4
Episode Synopses.....	9
"Murder on the RISING STAR".....	9
"The Magnificent Warriors".....	10
Diana's Journal.....	11
"The Celebration".....	14
untitled poem.....	50
Important Addresses.....	51
"Sealing Ceremony".....	53
Announcements.....	57
"The Hunted".....	58
Letters.....	61
"The Trap".....	64
Contest.....	82
"The Birthday Party".....	84
Pandora's Box.....	88
"Allies" (Part II).....	89
Editorial.....	94
A Television First!.....	95
Staff Credits.....	96

"Purple and Orange" is intended solely for the enjoyment of fans of the ABC-TV series BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and is the official publication of Battlestar OSIRIS, c/o The New Fantasy Shop, 5651 West Belmont Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60634.

Contributions and letters of comment are encouraged and welcomed.

Copyright 1980 by Battlestar OSIRIS. This copyright covers only original material and in no way is intended to infringe upon or supercede copyrights held by Universal City Studios, Glen A. Larson, ABC-TV, or any other holders of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA materials. All rights revert to contributors.

EPISODE GUIDE

The following is a list of all episodes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, as of the end of the 1978/79 television season, along with their broadcast dates.

9/17/78	"Battlestar GALACTICA"	1/28/79	"The Man with Nine Lives"
9/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I)	2/18/79	"Murder on the RISING STAR"
10/01/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II)	2/25/79	"Greetings from Earth"
10/08/78	"The Lost Warrior"	3/11/79	"Baltar's Escape"
10/15/78	"The Long Patrol"	3/18/79	"Experiment in Terra"
10/22/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I)	4/01/79	"Take the CELESTRA"
10/29/78	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II)	4/08/79	"Fire in Space" - repeat
11/12/78	"The Magnificent Warriors"	4/29/79	"The Hand of God"
11/19/78	"The Young Lords"	6/02/79	"The Living Legend" (Part I) - repeat
11/26/78	"The Living Legend" (Part I)	6/09/79	"The Living Legend" (Part II) - repeat
12/03/78	"The Living Legend" (Part II)	6/16/79	"The Young Lords" - repeat
12/17/78	"Fire in Space"	6/23/79	"The Long Patrol" - repeat
12/24/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat	7/07/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part I) - repeat
12/31/78	"Lost Planet of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat	7/14/79	"The Gun on Ice Planet Zero" (Part II) - repeat
1/14/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I)	7/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part I) - repeat
1/21/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II)	7/28/79	"War of the Gods" (Part II) - repeat
		8/04/79	"The Man with Nine Lives" - repeat

Colonel Lyra's Log

(Personal and Confidential)

I woke up screaming again, just as I always do from that particular nightmare. It is always so vivid, so real, I could believe it all took place only centons ago, instead of yahren.

The time has come to exorcise a few ghosts. With all of our present crises I cannot be jittery and sandy-eyed from lack of sleep -- and I will not be able to sleep now. Perhaps setting my story out in front of me will chase some of my personal demons away. Lords know we have enough collective ones to chase.

It was a lovely cool morning on Virgon. My husband was working on an electronics project for the military, and he liked to get to his laboratory before traffic became too heavy. Many of my son's friends lived on the base, and, as he frequently did, he was heading off to "work" with his father. I kissed them both, and watched fondly as the two of them climbed into the hovermobile.

Tears sting behind my eyes as I remember that is the last time I saw my tall, handsome husband and my beautiful, lively, enchanting six-yahren-old son alive.

I was working for the military, too, but in a different way. It was my job to write the manuals for my husband's inventions, and I much preferred working at home, in comfort and quiet.

I was at my console when the attack came. I could hear the fighters screaming overhead and feel the charge in the air from their laser bolts. The main target was the base, and that's where my husband and son were.

I wasn't aware of it at the time, but I began to run toward my husband's laboratory. Gradually I realized the raid was over, and where I was running. As I got closer to the base, running became a clamber as more and more debris hindered my progress.

When I reached the vicinity of my husband's lab I went to the Warrior who seemed to be in charge of rescue efforts and fire-fighting. I was told they didn't have time to search; they were too busy helping the ones who were in plain sight.

So I began my own search, and this is the stuff of my nightmare. In the shell of what had been a marvelously equipped laboratory, I climb in slow motion over heaps that once were computers and desks, over molten blobs that once were files. My palms are cut to ribbons when my hands slip off a wet console into metal rubble. I begin to call for my husband and son. My calls become screams when I find them. My husband's body lies atop that of my

son. My husband gave his life to try to protect our son, and even that sacrifice was not enough. I scream, and I scream, and eventually I wake.

The strangest part, as I look back on all that happened, is that I didn't cry. For almost two yahren I didn't cry. I was so consumed with anger and hatred there was no room for the deep sorrow -- until that day on Caprica.

After the loss of my husband and son, I sat in my house, isolated from everyone and everything, for an entire sector. I wore that house like armour-plate. And every day I fed my anger. I was on the verge of an emotional upheaval when I happened to notice one of those utterly ridiculous recruitment adverts on the scanner. It may have been ridiculous, but that advert saved my sanity. There was the vent for my anger. I would become a Warrior. I enlisted the next day.

I threw all the energies that pent-up anger gave me into my training. I was denied admittance to the Caprican Academy on the grounds that I already possessed several advanced degrees. It was logical, but at the time it only stoked the fires. I attacked flight school with a vengeance I doubt the instructors had seen before or since. I was single-handedly going to defeat the Cylon Empire.

I graduated at the top of my class with the rank of Flight Sergeant -- and because I scored so high in all my tests was assigned as a very junior aide at the Academy. More fuel for my personal fires; I couldn't very well destroy the Cylons from a desk on Caprica.

And all this time I hadn't cried.

* * * * *

The park that bordered the Academy was lush and green. It was a refuge for all the personnel when the military way became too much. It was a lovely spring day, and because of my confinement behind a desk my personal fires were on the verge of blazing forth. Finally, I signed out, and went for a walk.

I suppose I even walked with a vengeance, because to this day I do not remember seeing the gentleman before I collided with him. After a perfunctory apology, I began to turn away. He stopped me by gently placing his hand on my arm. When I looked up at him, his eyes pierced to my soul with understanding.

"Are you all right?" he asked me.

I answered, "No, sir, but that's no fault of our accident."

I swear I don't remember where our conversation went from there. I just know that two centars later found me still in the man's company, looking into those piercing, gentle eyes, admiring his calm and elegant manner, holding a strong, comforting hand -- and

blurting out my life story.

My new friend held my hand while I cried, and wiped the tears from my cheeks like a father when I was finished. He also pointed out to me that I had lost the person my husband had loved; I had allowed that person to be swallowed up in hate. We talked and walked all afternoon, my stranger and I, and he guided me toward the realization that I had done the right thing for all the wrong reasons.

When I returned to the Academy that evening, I was a new, or rather rediscovered, person. I was whole. I had my anger, yes, but I also had sorrow and joy and hope and all that goes along with them.

It was yahrens before that man crossed my path again, but even before I knew who he was, Commander Adama held a place in my heart for that healing afternoon.

Within days of that encounter I was transferred to a fighting unit. My first missions were close to the home worlds, and were considered exceedingly dull by the old hands, but flying was still new enough to me to be a thrill even if the missions were uneventful.

They didn't stay uneventful for long; our ship was assigned to patrol the outer limits of home space.

My first promotion was really not that difficult to achieve. In one of my first battles, I noticed a Cylon Raider before my Captain did. It just so happened I saved his life. My lieutenancy followed quickly upon that act, because of all the qualifications I brought with me from civilian life, he said.

It took a little longer to achieve my captaincy, but even that was relatively quick in coming. I was transferred to the ATLANTIA, and she was taking aggressive missions against the Cylons. Almost as soon as we set out, our Captain was caught in one of the Cylons' infamous pinwheels. Our Commander needed a Captain, and as I had the most seniority and experience, (for some reason almost all our pilots seemed very young), I was appointed.

Rank is very nice; it provides you with privilege and more cubits, and usually respect. What the textbooks don't tell you is that is also brings heartache. I wanted to go on every mission, keep as many of those young cadets out of the skies as possible. Many is the time since I was promoted to Captain I have returned to my quarters and wept for some young cadet's foolishness that cost him his life -- and for my inability to shield every last one of them.

The next section of my life travels in some very ordinary circles. It is a round of patrols, rest, and more missions, interspersed with unpopular decisions. Every officer makes them, or she is not a proper officer.

That all changed with the Battle of Sarasson. Two battlestars were ambushed by Cylons in what was supposed to be friendly space. The battle raged for centars, and I lost count of how many times I returned to my ship just long enough to refuel and head out to the fray again. We lost over a hundred fighters that day, and both battlestars were heavily damaged, but we survived, and we won.

For some reason I have yet to determine, my Commander singled me out for recognition for what was done that day. I do not feel I did anything exceptional. I certainly did no more than those who gave their lives. But, I was awarded the Gold Star Cluster for exceptional bravery. Because of that award, I came to the attention of some very senior officers.

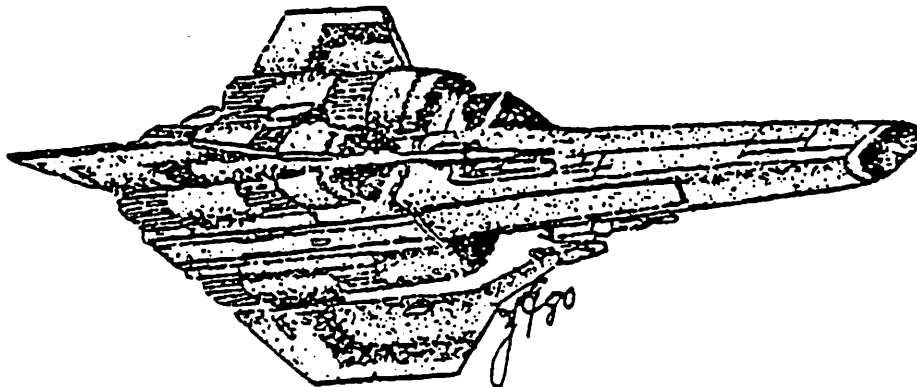


The Colonel of the battlestar OSIRIS had reluctantly retired. This came within a section of my receipt of the Cluster. You can imagine my surprise when my Commander handed me a communique from the Supreme Commander, asking whether or not I would accept the post of Executive Officer aboard the OSIRIS. It seems he was asking rather than telling because the OSIRIS was heading out on an exploratory mission, and they were attempting to fill all posts with volunteers; they had no idea how long the OSIRIS would be out of port. I really had no desire to be an executive officer. I wanted to fly. Almost in passing, the communique mentioned that the post of Flight Commander was also open. I told the Commander I would not accept the post of Executive Officer, but I would accept that of Flight Commander. I had been given to understand the rank of Colonel went with the position of Executive Officer, but not with that of Flight Commander. My Commander was rather surprised that I would turn down that type of promotion. I was equally surprised when my orders arrived making me Flight Commander of the OSIRIS, and promoting me to Colonel.

So much has happened to me in a relatively short span of time, that it is sometimes difficult to fathom. One thing I have learned, however, is that I really do not direct my life. Things happen to me. Still, every time I feel useless, I return to that afternoon on Caprica. Things may happen to me, but I choose the quality of my life, and I have ever since Commander Adama pointed out to me the mistakes I was making.

* * * * *

That is a very sparse outline of how I came to be Flight Commander of the battlestar OSIRIS. It covers some of the major points of my life, and omits quite a few. But my purpose here was not to write my autobiography. It was to exorcise some of my personal ghosts. I think I may have accomplished that. I feel I may be able to sleep now. Tomorrow will be time enough to deal with our collective demons.



Back by popular (?) demand, our BATTLESTAR GALACTICA episode synopses, two of which follow.

"Murder on the RISING STAR" (2/18/79):

When Wing Sergeant Ortega, a long-time rival of Starbuck's with whom he has fought publicly, is found dead, Starbuck becomes the logical suspect. He was seen running from the area where the body was found; and his laser proves to be the termination weapon. A Tribunal is ordered; and Apollo and Boomer set out to prove Starbuck's innocence by finding the real killer.

The victim's wingman gives them two leads, and they promptly consult the Fleet's personnel computer for any information on a man known as Karibdis. There is no record whatsoever of the man, but Adama recognizes the name as that of Baltar's pilot and electronics expert. Only Baltar, locked aboard the prison barge, can identify Karibdis; and his price for assisting them is one they cannot pay -- his freedom.

Starbuck, despairing of proving his innocence, escapes from the GALACTICA brig, but Apollo finds him before he can leave the battlestar. Starbuck is faced with a major decision -- try to run, and risk having to fire on his friends when Adama sends them after him, or trust Apollo to defend him before the Tribunal. Ready to launch, he changes his mind at the last possible moment and decides to risk the Tribunal.

Denied more time by Adama, who must obey the law whatever his personal wishes, Apollo and Boomer visit the RISING STAR to follow up their only other lead. They find that three men are aboard the pleasure craft illegally, and that all three were being blackmailed by Ortega. Any one of them would have had a motive for murder. Apollo and Boomer take all three back to the GALACTICA.

Apollo is convinced that one of the three men is really Karibdis, and Ortega's murderer; and he hits upon a dangerous scheme to unmask the killer. He deliberately sets himself up as a target, telling the three that the killer has been identified; he will be taking their shuttle on from the GALACTICA to the prison barge to pick up Baltar, Karibdis's former commander, the only man who can identify him.

When the shuttle lands on the GALACTICA, Boomer and the three suspects disembark -- and Karibdis slips back on board as Boomer heads for the Tribunal to substitute for Apollo. Apollo, fully aware that someone else is aboard the shuttle, offers Baltar his life in exchange for his assistance, trying to persuade him that Karibdis will want dead anyone who can identify him as the man responsible for sabotaging the defence computers on Caprica the night of the Cylon attack. Baltar is unconvinced until Karibdis, revealing himself, refuses to release him.

The Tribunal and its audience listen in horror over an open communications channel as Karibdis, who has admitted to killing Ortega, orders Apollo to turn over his laser. Then Baltar, realizing that Apollo was right, strikes Karibdis's weapon away; Apollo attacks him, and the listeners hear the sound of a laser blast, then silence.

There is a seemingly endless moment of suspense, then Apollo's voice comes over the open channel. With Baltar's reluctant aid, Ortega's real murderer has been apprehended; Starbuck is free.

* * * * *

"The Magnificent Warriors" (11/28/78):

Two of the GALACTICA's three agro ships are destroyed in a Cylon attack; the third is damaged, its airlock destroyed, and its crop dead. New seed is required. Adama conceives of trading an old model, unmarked (so no one can trace it to a Colonial battlestar) energizer to an agro colony in exchange for the seed, since such colonies are always in need of energy sources. Unfortunately, the only energizer Apollo can find for him that meets all of his requirements belongs to Siress Bellabee, a woman who fancies herself in love with Adama. Her price for the energizer -- he must court her. Adama has no real choice; without the seed, the Fleet will starve.

A shuttle carries Adama and several Warriors to the agro planet. Siress Bellabee goes along, too, presumably because she does not want to let Adama (or her energizer) out of her sight.

Starbuck and Boomer go into town with the energizer to arrange the trade for seed. Bellabee begins to flirt, taking advantage of what she considers a romantic setting; but Adama shies off, using the presence of his son and grandson as an excuse. Much as he may want to honour his bargain, he is finding it extremely difficult to do so...

In town, Sire Bogan (who in effect runs the agro colony) refuses a trade for the energizer; instead, he offers Starbuck and Boomer work to enable them to earn money to pay for the amount of seed they need. On the way back to the shuttle with the disappointing news, the two men are ambushed and their vehicle stolen -- along, of course, with the energizer. While Boomer continues back to the shuttle to tell the others what has happened, Starbuck returns to town, certain that it was Bogan's agents who stole the energizer. After all, he says, why

buy something when you can get it for nothing?

Starbuck is right, of course, but not entirely for the reasons he gives Boomer. The town needs a "constable" before the next high full moon, which is that night, to stand against nonhuman raiders who regularly enter the town to steal grain and women. The constable must face them each time they come -- and no constable has ever lived to do it twice.

Starbuck, who hasn't enough money to buy seed, enters a card game in order to obtain more -- and to get information on his attackers. Being Starbuck, he wins -- and continues to do so, until he wins the solid gold constable's badge; in accepting it, he unwittingly accepts a "lifetime" job...

Adama, Apollo, Boomer, and Bellabee arrive in time for the game's conclusion. Adama is furious with Starbuck for wasting his time in a card game, until he learns the real situation. That night, when the nonhumans enter the town, they find four Colonial Warriors confronting them, holding them off with laser fire. In the chaos of battle, the nonhuman leader seizes Bellabee.

The four Warriors from the GALACTICA follow the raiders to their camp, where Adama tries diplomacy on their lazy and self-centered leader. He fails, but Starbuck finds a solution. The nonhuman leader becomes the new town constable; in exchange for the townspeople supplying all his needs, he will see to it that his people work -- and his interest in his own comfort will make him keep the peace.

Bellabee is freed, and frees Adama from his bargain. And the Warriors return to the GALACTICA with the seed they require.

DIANA'S JOURNAL

(Personal entry -- Voice code retrieval only.)

It's not that I mind having the other pilots in the Squadron think me cold and unemotional. In fact, ever since the OSIRIS left on this exploratory mission, I've made every effort to foster that belief. But there are times when I simply cannot hide my feelings any longer. Every time we lose another Viper, every time one of my friends dies in this seemingly endless war...

It began a long time ago. I was an orphan, adopted by one of the more influential families on Caprica. My foster parents were incredibly good to me, far kinder than many real parents would have been. They had children of their own, and I was always treated as one of them. They must have had a hard time with us, four active children constantly getting into every conceivable kind of mischief, and a few kinds that must have seemed inconceivable to anyone but us. They loved us very much.

When my older brother went to the Academy, I missed him -- but it wasn't until I became a cadet myself that I realized it was more than just a kid sister missing a well-liked and much-admired brother. Like so many other girls (I sometimes think every girl, every woman who ever met him!), I adored him. I was in love with him.

I still am. Only the Cylons and this yahrens-old war have taken him from me, just as they've destroyed everything else that ever mattered to me.

There were other loves, of course, and several casual affairs. What young girl doesn't have them? But not even someone like Cadet Starbuck (who must be "Lieutenant Starbuck" by now, if he's still alive) could meet my standards. Starbuck was a wonderful man, a good friend. But I'm afraid I compared everyone to my brother -- and no one could ever measure up to him.

Once, when I was still a very junior second-yahren cadet, I felt I couldn't endure it any longer. I went down to the river and found myself what I thought was an extremely well-hidden spot, and I just sat there and cried. I was nearly scared out of my wits (what few I possessed!) when someone came up and put a comforting arm around me.

Lyra's always been the sort of person it's easy to talk to. At least, for me, she is. We sat there by the river for centars, and I told her all about my brother. And she told me about her husband and her little boy, and about how they'd died. We became friends that day. We've been friends ever since.

Lyra helped teach me how to put things into perspective, although I do still let things get out of proportion at times -- like when my brother and his closest friends were assigned to the GALACTICA and had to leave only a section after graduation. So I've learned to close a part of myself away from others, and now I keep my feelings to myself, sharing them only with special friends and with this private journal.

In any event, I graduated at the top of my class and was assigned as an instructor at the Academy. Of course, I wanted the GALACTICA. I was a passable navigator, an exceptionally good pilot, a skilled ethologist, and had a whole string of highly impressive credentials. But I had to stay on Caprica. When word of the OSIRIS's mission was posted, I promptly volunteered. I needed to get away, to escape.

Our exploratory mission lasted for several yahrens. We found a great many interesting planets, a number of interesting species and cultures. And the entire crew was in high spirits when we started for home.

When we learned of the destruction of the Colonies, it was as though the entire universe had collapsed upon us. Commander Christopher initiated a search, but all we found was disaster.

Caprica still exists, but in Cylon hands. My home was destroyed. My family...

I want to believe they escaped. The GALACTICA survived the holocaust, along with a small number of civilian ships, and the OSIRIS has been following them from star system to star system ever since we learned of their existence. I want desperately to believe my family is with them.

But there is no way of knowing for certain who survived and who perished. In fact, we don't even know who commands the GALACTICA now. All any of us can do is follow -- and hope.

I know it's unlikely any of my family survived. My mother and younger brother probably died in the attack on Caprica. My father, sister, and older brother (how I hate that word -- as much as I still love him!) were all Warriors; they likely died in space, when the Cylons destroyed our Fleet.

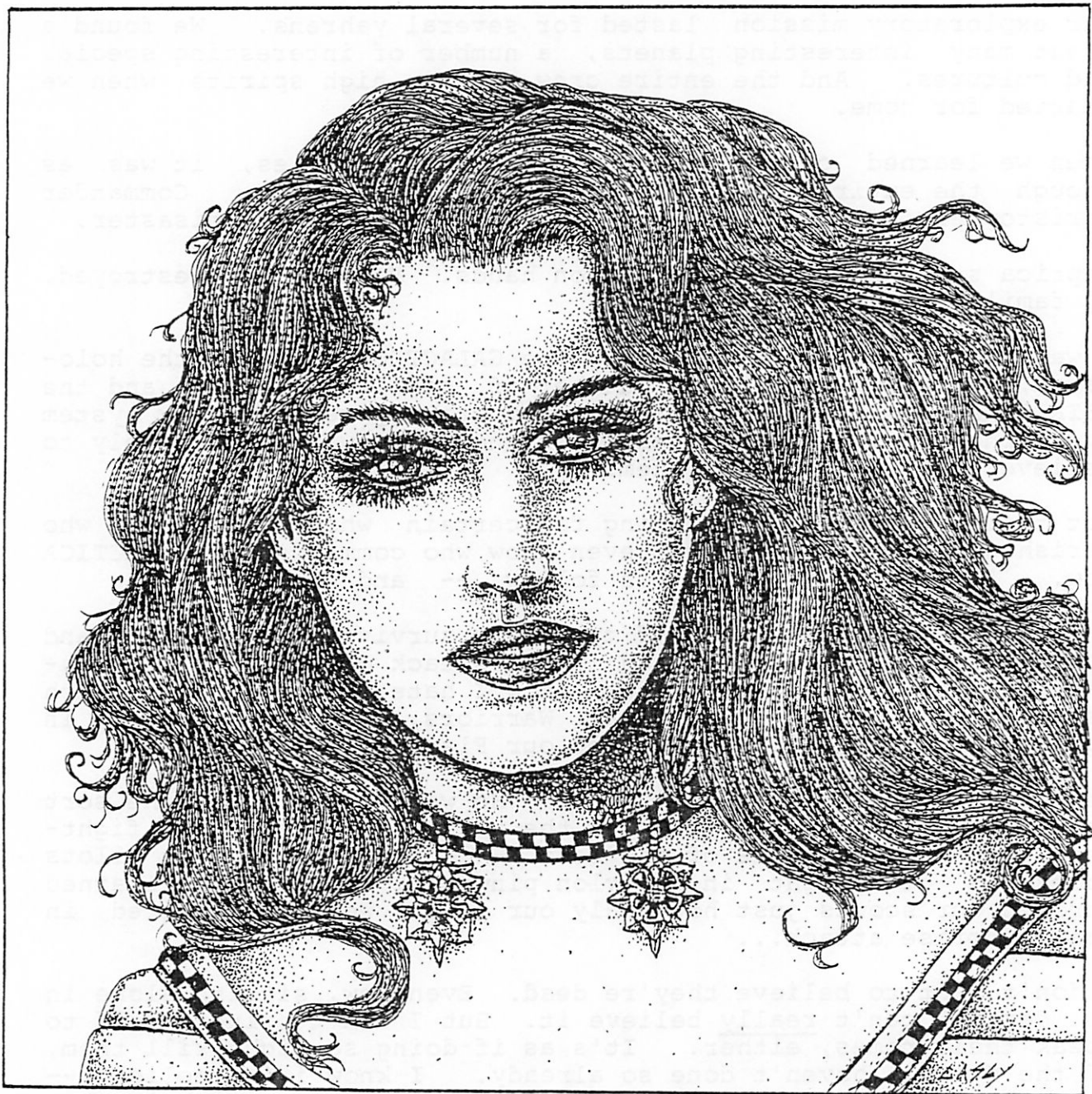
Certainly my brother must be dead. He was a pilot -- the sort who'd always have his Viper in the midst of the heaviest fighting. He was good, one of the best -- but even the best pilots sometimes get caught in a Cylon pinwheel. And we've learned through our scouts just how badly our pilots were outnumbered in that surprise attack...

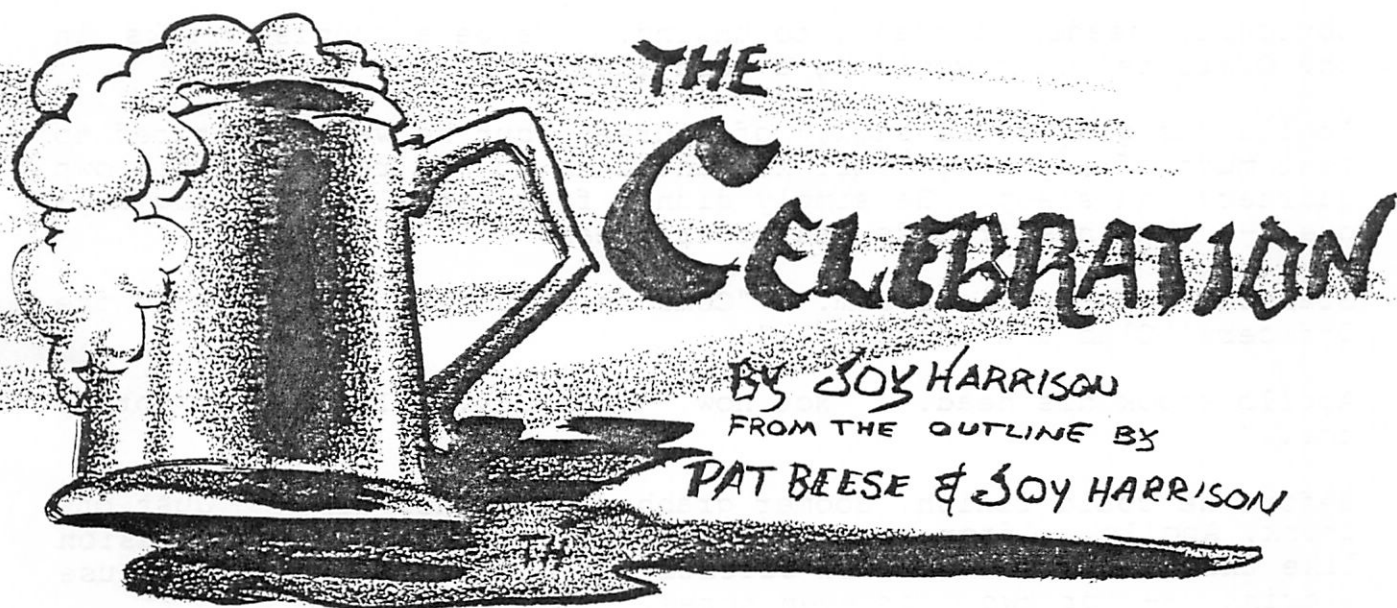
I don't want to believe they're dead. Even now, sitting alone in the dark, I can't really believe it. But I can't bring myself to speak their names, either. It's as if doing so might kill them, if the Cylons haven't done so already. I know it's foolish -- and I know Lyra would laugh if I told her. But I can't help what I feel.

It's funny. I have the strangest feeling that, in spite of the odds, in spite of all the probabilities, they are alive somewhere -- in grave danger, perhaps, but alive. I want so badly for it to be true...

The rest of our crew must feel as I do, hoping desperately for some news of those dear to them, wondering if they're safe, praying for them.

Finding the GALACTICA will give us an answer...





The door to Commander Adama's quarters slid shut behind them, ending the ordeal of a formal report. Starbuck, Boomer, and Apollo exchanged looks telling clearly of three very different states of mind. The mission now officially over had been a particularly trying one for all three of them. Until they actually landed aboard the GALACTICA, each had entertained serious doubts about its success.

When Apollo, under Cylon attack, first contacted the GALACTICA to request urgently-needed assistance, Starbuck and Boomer had wanted to aid him at once. It hadn't mattered to them that Apollo's real mission was to lure the Cylons away from the Fleet. He was in trouble, and they wanted to help. Colonel Tigh agreed to persuade the Commander to allow the two of them to wait for Apollo just beyond the Hatari star system and lead him back to the GALACTICA if he should be able to get away. They waited there until the last possible micron, hoping despite all odds to hear from him. They'd actually given up when Apollo's transmission, badly garbled at first, reached them. Now, it was over.

Starbuck was elated -- and it showed. The Lords knew they'd all been through enough tragedy lately. It was time things began working out right again. He had fully intended to disobey orders, if necessary, and go after Apollo. It had been Starbuck who, again and again, kept delaying the return to the GALACTICA for "just a few more centons" -- until they'd nearly run out of fuel on the way back. Just now, as far as Starbuck was concerned, having Apollo back safely was sufficient cause for celebration.

Like Starbuck, Boomer was delighted by the successful outcome of their mission, although as usual he was far less open about showing it. He was also a little worried about Apollo; the Captain

obviously needed a chance to unwind. Maybe a couple drinks in the Officers' Club would be a good idea.

Apollo was glad to be back, of course, but he was too tired to feel much of anything. All he wanted to do was return to his own quarters and sleep. He simply didn't feel capable of facing anyone -- but his friends had other ideas.

Starbuck took Apollo's arm. "Come on, buddy. Let's go to the Officers' Club and celebrate."

Apollo shook his head. "Not now, Starbuck. I'm really not up to..."

Before he could finish, Boomer grabbed his other arm. "Just one drink, Apollo. After all, it's not every day we have an occasion like this." And, he added silently to himself, we could all use a drink -- or two, or even three.

With a mental shrug, Apollo allowed his two friends to drag him off down the corridor. "All right! All right! But just one drink!"

Starbuck and Boomer exchanged grins. "Okay!"

The Officers' Club was virtually deserted; the three friends had the place pretty much to themselves. They sat down at a table in a dark corner, Starbuck and Boomer silently respecting Apollo's desire for at least some privacy. Starbuck signalled, and the barman promptly brought three mugs of ale.

With a happy grin, Starbuck raised his mug. "To Apollo's safe return," he said. Boomer echoed him, and the three friends drank.

When they finished the ale, Apollo got to his feet. "I'll see you two later. Right now, I..."

He didn't get any farther. Starbuck, who'd already signalled the barman, grabbed Apollo's arm, pulling him back to his seat. The timing was perfect, as three fresh mugs of ale appeared in front of them. "We should drink to Earth as well," Starbuck observed.

"To Earth," the others responded. And still more ale appeared.

By the time they'd drunk to the GALACTICA, the glory of Caprica, Commander Adama, Colonel Tigh, their "rag-tag" fleet, and the ultimate defeat of the Cylons, Apollo had given up trying to leave. In fact, he'd pretty much decided that, surprisingly enough, he was actually enjoying himself.

Starbuck started to sing, only slightly off key, and Boomer joined in with enthusiasm, beating the rhythm on the table top. Apollo watched them for a couple of centons. Even if they were more than a little crazy, they were the best friends anyone could have. Feeling just a little crazy himself, he hesitantly joined

their song.

Still singing, Starbuck leaned back contentedly, mug in hand. It was beginning to look like a thoroughly enjoyable little festivity. Then, glancing past Apollo toward the door, he broke off in mid-note, a strange mixture of surprise, delight, and almost wicked glee on his face. He began to laugh.

"Starbuck, what in Hades is so funny?" Boomer demanded, feeling somewhat annoyed at the interruption. He and Apollo stared curiously at their friend, who was still looking toward the door. A quick glance showed nothing there.

For several microns, Starbuck was laughing too hard to explain. Then, nearly choking on his laughter, he answered Boomer's question with one of his own. "Do you two guys remember Captain Musca?"

"Musca?" Puzzled, Apollo considered the name, trying to pin down the memory. Then, "Of course! The electronics class at the Academy! He tried to confine us to quarters..." Apollo broke off, laughing; Boomer, too, joined in.

"Yeah, all that felgercarb about never looking like Warriors, and being late for class, and skipping assignments, and..." Starbuck was still laughing so hard he had trouble talking.

"Sure! The hovermobile! We really fixed him!" Boomer was laughing helplessly.

"It's a good thing he could never prove anything, though," Apollo observed. "We were in enough trouble already..."

* * * * *

Three somewhat rumpled-looking cadets dashed through the doorway into the lecture hall several centons late, skidded to a halt, and dropped into back-row seats. Musca looked up from his notes, frowning in annoyance. Those three again! They might be three of the best all-over students at the Academy, but their records in other classes didn't matter one bit here. It was time they learned a little proper respect for military discipline.

"Cadets Apollo, Boomer, and Starbuck! Front and center!"

Exchanging nervous glances, the three cadets obeyed.

"You were late again this morning, gentlemen. Precisely eleven point three centons late. Have you an explanation?"

Starbuck and Boomer exchanged a quick look; Apollo simply looked embarrassed. Starbuck, with his most innocent expression, began. "Well, sir, we were on our way here when we..."

Musca didn't give him time to continue. "I said 'explanation', Cadet Starbuck, not 'excuse'!" He glared at them for a micron. "Your latest lab analyses are due this morning, gentlemen. May I

have them now, please?"

"We haven't finished them yet, sir," Apollo reported reluctantly.

"Oh? Why not, may I ask?"

Starbuck tried his innocent look again. "Sir, we had a special assignment for..."

"You were on the triad courts. The games with Sagittara are in two days, are they not?"

"Yes, sir." Boomer wouldn't meet his angry gaze.

"Well, you three won't be playing. I'm placing you on report as of this morning. You will each receive a failing score for this section. In addition, since none of you seems capable of even acting like a proper Colonial Warrior, I am ordering you confined to quarters. Your time outside of classes is to be spent contemplating your behaviour and how to improve it. Dismissed!"

Nearly two centars later, a trio of very unhappy cadets left the lecture hall for their next class. Outwardly, Boomer was the coolest of the three; only an angry glitter in his eyes gave away his feelings. Apollo's fury was under such tight restraint that he was actually trembling. Starbuck was raging openly.

"That miserable, unspeakable little..." He swore fervently. "He knows the games with Sagittara are the most important of the season! And Caprica can't win without us! He's probably got a bet on Sagittara and wants us to lose!"

"Starbuck! That's enough! If anyone hears you talking like that..."

"What can they do, Apollo? Throw me out? Let them!"

"Starbuck!"

"Starbuck's right, Apollo." Boomer's voice was calm. "That guy's got it in for us -- and he knows just how to hurt us."

Apollo sighed. "All right. What do we do about it?"

Starbuck stared at him. "Do? What can we do?"

"There must be something..."

The possibility of revenge calmed Starbuck instantly. All three cadets were deep in thought when they reached their next class. They were models of military decorum all through that class, but not because of any great interest in weapons maintenance.

"I've got it!" Boomer announced after class. "The Captain flies here every morning in his own hovermobile, doesn't he?"

Apollo nodded.

"Well, I used to be pretty good at hot-linking hovermobiles when I was a kid."

"You're not thinking of stealing it, are you?" Apollo wouldn't condone theft.

"No, no -- nothing like that. But how about if we apply some of that electronics we've been learning? I can rig a remote in that hovermobile..."

"And we can take over when he comes in to land!" Starbuck sounded delighted, and Apollo was nodding enthusiastically.

"My father told me once that Musca never saw combat. He's never even flown a Viper. Starbuck?"

Starbuck grinned eagerly. "Never flown a Viper, huh? Knowing the commander of a battlestar sure has its uses. Boomer, if you can rig the remote, our dear Captain is going to find out what combat flying is like!"

The next morning was beautiful. The sky was clear, the air fresh, with only a slight breeze. Shortly after dawn, Apollo, Boomer, and Starbuck slipped out of their quarters and hurried to the landing field. Boomer carried a small black box.

"Are you sure you remember how to work this thing, Starbuck? Once it's active, this..."

"I remember! I remember!"

"Apollo, are you positive you can recognize the hovermobile? If Musca lands before we can switch on..."

"Stop fussing, Boomer. It's as easy to recognize as my father's. Relax. We shouldn't have long to wait."

For a few centons, the three cadets crouched behind the shrubbery lining the landing field fence and watched the incoming Academy traffic. There was a great deal of it, since most of the senior officers lived outside Caprica's capital city and commuted daily.

Suddenly Apollo grabbed Boomer's shoulder. "There!" he said, pointing skyward. "The one with the yellow triangles."

"I see it! Let's give him just another couple of microns, to be sure he's in range." Boomer was suddenly very cool again, very confident. "Now!" He pushed a button on his black box, which immediately began to emit a faint, high-pitched hum, then quickly handed the box to Starbuck.

Starbuck settled more comfortably on the ground and began pushing a small toggle switch in apparently random directions. It was Boomer's version of a flight control. Above them, a hovermobile marked with yellow triangles suddenly began to execute a rapid series of dizzying maneuvers.



"It's working!" Apollo whispered, grinning delightedly.

"Of course, it's working. I said it would, didn't I?"

Starbuck watched the hovermobile carefully as he maneuvered it through dives, spins, hairpin turns. Every now and then, he glanced across the landing field, checking to be sure no one was in danger from the wildly gyrating machine. He didn't want anyone hurt.

The landing field itself was a scene of frantic activity, as ground officials and Security personnel rushed everywhere. The

three cadets could easily imagine the scene in the control center, with the senior officer bellowing at "that utter idiot" to stop playing games, land at once, and consider himself under arrest.

They could imagine Musca's reactions as well. He hadn't even been near a Viper in yahrens, and here he was, trying to fly something that was suddenly behaving like one. He was terrified, frantic, trying desperately to control a hovermobile that was doing things no hovermobile was ever supposed to do, and wondering what in Hades was going on.

Some five centons later, Starbuck landed the hovermobile as if it were made of fine crystal. Switching off the remote, he tossed the now-inactive box back to Boomer. The three cadets, grinning merrily, watched as Security forces closed in on the unfortunate Musca and escorted him into the control center. Then they slipped away.

Just over a centar later, three immaculately-groomed cadets entered a nearly deserted lecture hall and took seats in the center of the front row. The hall gradually filled; ten centons later, exactly on time, everyone was there -- except the instructor.

Another twelve centons passed before Musca arrived. His uniform was rumpled, his hands dirty, his hair uncombed. He stalked to the front of the room, not really seeing anything around him; he was far too angry.

When Security had finally listened to his protests, Musca got them to go out to the landing field with him. They examined his hovermobile very carefully -- and found a small device, cleverly concealed, that was obviously part of a remote override control.

In that centon, Musca knew who was responsible. Those three cadets he'd ordered confined to quarters -- the three who were constantly late to class, who never finished assignments or reports on time, who were always untidy and just on the edge of being insubordinate -- the three cadets who somehow always managed to pull the top scores in the class. He knew, with absolute certainty -- and he knew, too, he could never prove it. Any evidence would already have been destroyed. And the Academy's honour code would not allow him to accuse them outright, or even question them, without some evidence of guilt.

Musca faced his class. There was an expression of mirth on nearly every face. Only three cadets showed proper respect -- three flawlessly groomed young men seated in the center of the front row. Cadets Apollo, Boomer, and Starbuck.

Suddenly, Starbuck winked at him. Boomer grinned. And Apollo, looking very serious and proper, raised his hand to gaze pointedly at the chronometer on his left wrist.

* * * * *

Starbuck wiped away tears of laughter, then signalled the barman for another round. "I remember, he looked so damned frustrated! And there was no way in Hades he could touch us."

"Yeah, but we still didn't get to play Sagittara, and our teams lost that yahren," Boomer reminded him.

"It was worth it," Apollo replied. "I don't think I'll ever forget the look on his face..."

"He sure hasn't forgotten. He stuck his head in here just now, spotted us, and ran."

"Starbuck, seeing you would make any sane man run," Boomer remarked.

"Sane?" Starbuck was grinning.

"You know," Apollo observed, "if he'd had any proof at all, we wouldn't be here now. Must be an early example of the famous Starbuck luck." He was trying very hard not to laugh. "Like all those nights the Academy staff tried to catch you in the war-game room."

Starbuck was a picture of injured innocence. "There was never any truth to those rumours."

"Starbuck, we were there, remember? In fact, Boomer and I both tried some of the games in your little 'amusement arcade'."

"We never won, though," Boomer said with mock sorrow.

"Well, maybe I did set up a few little games..."

"A few? Starbuck, even my father knew about them! I think nearly everyone in the Colonies heard about what went on at the Academy after hours. And that unholy luck of yours..."

"Now, now, Captain," Starbuck teased, relieved that Apollo had finally relaxed a bit. "Seems to me, your luck wasn't so bad, either."

"Oh?"

"Well, I seem to remember a certain very proper young cadet who just happened to start the biggest damned snowball fight in Academy history, right in the middle of a visit by the entire Council of the Twelve and the battlestar commanders." He couldn't help laughing again as he remembered the scene -- thousands of cadets, and a good many junior staff members as well, hurling snowballs from atop roofs, from around corners, from behind bushes and trees.

"With all that fresh, lovely snow," Apollo began, chuckling, "who could resist?"

"Not me," Boomer laughed. "But did you have to aim one at the commander of this particular battlestar? I mean, you knew where we were being assigned. Over a thousand cadets hurling snowballs, and you had to take aim at..."

"Shh! Boomer! No names!" Starbuck hissed, glancing around. Anyone not seeing his expression would have thought him nervous. "You wouldn't want the Commander to find out now, would you?"

"Lords, but we'd have been in trouble if he'd known then," Apollo said, laughing. "I don't think he'd mind if he found out now, though. You two may not believe it, but he really does have a sense of humour."

"There was a time, buddy," Starbuck confided, "when I wasn't too sure about his son having one."

"Who? Me?" It was Apollo's turn to act innocent.

"No one else. You were pretty stuffy those first few sections."

For a centon, Apollo sat silently, considering Starbuck's words. Then he laughed. "I suppose I was pretty dreadful. But you two sure took care of that!"

* * * * *

For ten sections, all the Academy's new cadets were kept together. Constantly. They drilled together, studied together, ate together, slept together -- in short, lived together. Those who cared to, got to know one another extremely well, either personally or by reputation.

Then the class was broken up into three-man units. There were no personal choices involved; computers made the assignments, for reasons comprehensible only to other computers. The members of each unit would live and work together for the remainder of their Academy careers.

Every now and then, three cadets were sadly mismatched.

Starbuck was convinced the computers had really blown their circuits this time. He and Boomer were already good friends -- but that other guy!

"Boomer, he simply cannot be for real. I mean, how straight can you get?"

"Well, Starbuck, he is Commander Adama's son. And I suppose two generations of battlestar commanders could warp just about anyone."

"Yeah, but do we have to bunk with him? It just isn't fair!"

"Fair or not, my friend, we're stuck with him. We'll just have to make the best of it."

Starbuck was not at all happy about sharing the next few yahrens of his life with a traditional military type, especially one related to two battlestar commanders. Cadet Apollo impressed him as the sort who'd obey every rule, volunteer for every assignment -- and object to any sort of fun. Besides, he was far too serious to ever be good company. Having to live with him for yahrens was just too much...

Apollo wasn't happy about the situation, either. Eldest son of an old military family, he'd looked forward eagerly to entering Caprica's famed Academy, finest in the Twelve Worlds. He knew Adama intended him to command the GALACTICA one day, and he hoped to be worthy of that command. Starbuck and Boomer had already acquired quite a reputation, and he didn't want any part of them. He would simply have to make the best of things.

Starbuck, however, lacked Apollo's patience. Within a section, he was convinced -- something had to be done. If Apollo spouted "the Code" at him one more time...

Preliminary flight training gave Starbuck the opportunity. The longer he considered his plan, the better it seemed. He and Boomer called a war council.

"The simulators," Starbuck said. "Everything's done alphabetically, so Apollo always goes first. I know you're pretty good at electronics. If you can wire the controls, I think I've got an idea how to take care of our pompous Cadet Apollo."

"Easy," Boomer replied with a grin. "Just give me a few centars to work on that simulator."

"You'll have them. Somehow!"

It took two days.

When a messenger called the flight instructor away, no one thought it unusual. Only two people had any idea why that message arrived -- and neither Starbuck nor Boomer was about to admit anything.

"Carry on, gentlemen," the instructor ordered as he left for an imaginary conference. The simulator was foolproof. His three cadets knew the launch routine. He was neither worried nor suspicious.

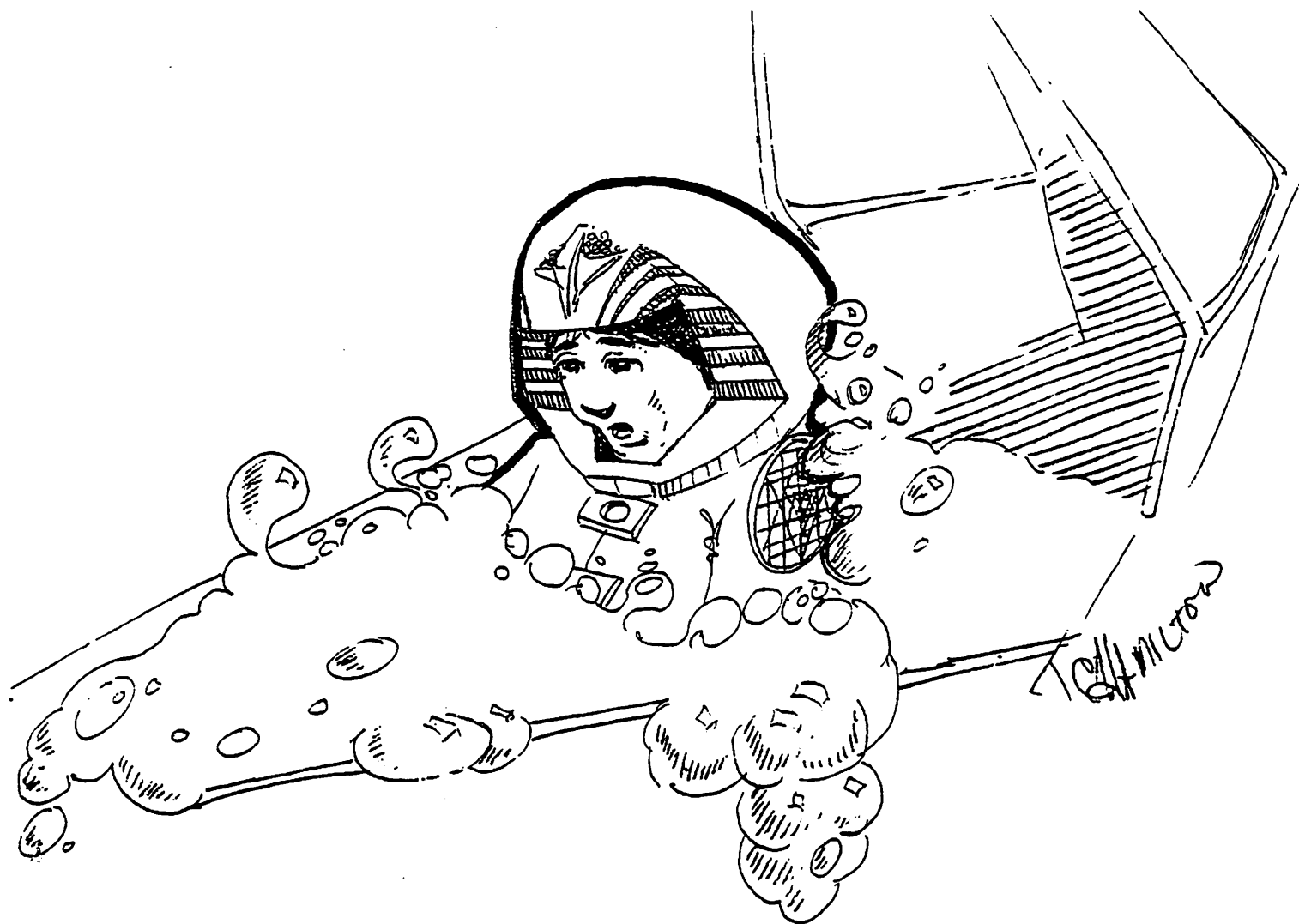
And neither was Apollo. He knew his own abilities and would have felt confident in a real Viper. He put on his helmet, settled into the cockpit, and ran through the pre-launch check. A recorded voice came through his helmet -- "Launch when ready." He didn't see the expressions of eager anticipation on two watching faces as his thumb came down on the control.

"What in..."

Instead of a launch sequence, there was a sudden hissing sound.

The cockpit of the simulator filled almost instantly with a self-generating packing foam that solidified upon contact with air.

It happened so fast Apollo didn't have time to react. In microns, the soft, resilient foam reached nearly to his chin, and he was completely immobilized in it.



Starbuck and Boomer watched gleefully, laughing so hard that anyone seeing them would have thought them insane. Everything had worked exactly as they'd planned.

Apollo might not have been able to move, but he could see the other two cadets. He guessed instantly what had happened, and he was furious. Helpless, he sat in the simulator, trapped by the packing foam, and swore at Starbuck and Boomer, demanding they free him at once. They only laughed harder.

Suddenly, Apollo broke off in mid-oath. He had been behaving like an insufferably pompous idiot, and maybe he'd been asking for something like this. It was so completely, so utterly ridiculous... He, too, began to laugh.

Starbuck and Boomer stared at him in amazement for a micron, then stared at each other, shaking their heads.

"He's crazy!" Starbuck exclaimed.

"Completely!"

"He doesn't look dangerous, though..."

Still laughing, Starbuck and Boomer, having decided Apollo was no longer likely to kill them, climbed onto the simulator, opened the canopy, and began digging him out. Within centons, the three cadets stood ankle-deep in shredded packing foam, clinging to one another and laughing so hard they could barely stand.

By the time the flight instructor returned, there was no trace of packing foam in the vicinity of the simulator. That night, Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer got drunk together for the first time.

* * * * *

Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer were all laughing helplessly over the memory of their friendship's peculiar birth. Starbuck and Boomer both remembered the look on Apollo's face as the packing foam billowed up around him; Apollo remembered the sudden evaporation of his anger, and the mirth that followed. From that centon, he recalled, the three young cadets had been inseparable. More than a training unit, they'd become a team -- and an unbeatable team at that.

"By the Lords," he said with a sigh, "we sure had fun."

"We sure did, buddy," Starbuck laughed.

"Yeah," Boomer concurred. "Even when we could play tricks only on one another."

"Boomer, what are you thinking of?" Apollo demanded.

"Oh, nothin', Captain."

"C'mon, Boomer. Give." Starbuck peered at him over the rim of his mug.

"Well, Apollo, you remember the time we switched room numbers, and Starbuck walked in on those three female cadets?"

Apollo laughed. "I sure do. You could hear them screaming all over the building."

"They weren't screaming," Starbuck protested. "They were just surprised, that's all. They loved every centon of it."

"The magic aura of Starbuck, huh?" Apollo laughed again. "I know, I know -- you never said it."

"Even if it is true..."

They were all laughing as the barman set still more ale in front of them. They'd lost track of how much they'd already drunk. After all, they were off duty for at least another fifteen centars, and this was a celebration. Focussing on that, Apollo waved the barman back and ordered a round of ambrosia.

"Ambrosia? Why?" Boomer asked.

"Something important. Wait..."

When three glasses of ambrosia arrived, Apollo struggled somewhat unsteadily to his feet, raising his glass. "To our friendship," he said solemnly.

"Friendship," Boomer echoed, raising a glass.

"May it endure forever," Starbuck added.

The three friends drained their glasses, and Apollo collapsed back into his chair, his face completely carefree.

Starbuck and Boomer exchanged knowing looks. They might be more than a little drunk, but they weren't so drunk they couldn't remember the purpose of this celebration. They'd both been worried about Apollo. Right now, though, the Captain seemed happier, more relaxed than at any time since his wife's death.

Starbuck was thinking of the past. He'd grown up an orphan and never really had a family until he met first Boomer, then Apollo. They were the closest thing to a family he'd ever had. He regarded them fondly, wondering just how to tell them what he felt without sounding foolish. Oh, frak! he thought. Just say it; they'll understand.

Starbuck hit the table with the flat of his hand, making glasses and mugs jump. "You know, you two guys are..." He broke off,

unable to finish. He struck the table again, deliberately this time, a puzzled look on his face as he tried to remember something just a little elusive. Apollo and Boomer stared at him as his puzzled expression changed to one of delight.

"Hey, do you guys remember the table we nailed to the ceiling?"

"Table!" Boomer exclaimed. He certainly remembered. "That was a whole damned room!"

* * * * *

Boomer heard someone call his name, turned, and saw Cadet Pictor hurrying toward him. Oh, frak! He didn't like to be deliberately rude, so how in Hades was he to get rid of the sneaky little daggit? Pictor was one of the few things about the Academy he definitely did not like.

For over a yahren now, Pictor had been a laser in the side of nearly all the cadets at the Academy. No one knew for certain how he gained admission, but one could guess -- the same way he stayed in. There was no proof, of course, but a good many cadets and staff officers had reason to suspect Cadet Pictor of blackmail. The young Arian had quite a reputation. If there was a bit of gossip to be heard, a lie (preferably malicious) to be spread -- then Pictor was your man. His victims wouldn't talk; they usually couldn't without incriminating themselves.

"Boomer, I want to talk to you. Privately."

There was something in Pictor's voice, in his eager expression, that suddenly worried Boomer. What could the little beast possibly want? Or -- a far more serious consideration -- what could he know? There were things in Boomer's past only his closest friends knew.

Boomer shrugged mentally. Oh, well, a couple of centons couldn't hurt.

About a centar later, when Apollo and Starbuck returned to their quarters, they walked in on a very troubled Boomer. Their friend was sitting in a chair by the window, chin on his hand, staring at nothing. He didn't appear to notice their presence.

"Hey, Boomer!" Starbuck was his usual cheerful self.

Boomer didn't even seem to hear him.

"Boomer?" Apollo, suddenly worried, glanced at Starbuck, then went to Boomer's side. "Boomer, what's wrong?"

Boomer jumped when Apollo touched his shoulder. There was a strange, hunted look in his eyes.

"What is it?" Apollo asked gently, sitting on the arm of another

chair. Starbuck, also concerned now, came to stand behind Apollo.

"Nothin' you can do," Boomer mumbled.

"Try us." Something of Apollo's confidence seemed to penetrate his friend's gloom.

"Pictor..."

"What's that slimy little snake done now?" Starbuck demanded.

Boomer sounded even more dejected than he looked. "He said he knows about me, my past. He threatened to go to the Commandant."

"So?"

"If he reports I was once classified a delinquent, I'll be thrown out of the Academy."

"Boomer, he can't prove anything..."

"But he can, Apollo! He had copies of Security records, reports from the juvenile authorities..."

"Then we get them away from him!"

"No, that's not the answer," Apollo said thoughtfully. "If he has access to Security records, he can get copies. There has to be another way..." His voice trailed off, and his eyes focussed on something his friends couldn't see. They waited silently for him to continue, knowing from experience that it would be pointless to interrupt. "He has to be taught a lesson..."

"Yeah, but how?"

"I don't... Wait! I do know! Starbuck! Boomer! We're going to teach Pictor a lesson he'll never forget! I doubt he'll ever trouble any of us again. And maybe we can help some of his potential victims as well."

"Apollo, what're you thinking?"

"Notoriety, Starbuck. And laughter. Draw attention to Pictor so his schemes can't be ignored."

"Huh?"

"We're going to scare him. We're going to show him that if we wanted to, we could take his blackmail evidence away from him -- or do anything else we wanted to."

Starbuck stared at his friend. "You want to explain that?"

"We're going to enter Pictor's quarters, leave proof we did, then

depart. Even though he'll know who was there, he won't be able to prove it to anyone. And the entire Academy will know about it."

"I still don't follow you."

"Neither do I," added Boomer. He sounded bewildered, but no longer hopeless.

Apollo explained his idea. They were going to give Pictor a warning -- one the other cadets would never let him forget. They'd be laughing at Pictor for yahrens...

The next evening, Boomer watched from the shadow of a large tree as Pictor left for a late class. After checking carefully to be sure no one else was home, he picked the lock, entered Pictor's quarters, then went to a window and signalled Apollo and Starbuck. They arrived wearing packs.

"We should have at least a couple of centars," he told them.

Apollo opened his pack and removed several tubes of quick-setting adhesive. "Sleeping quarters first."

For a long while, the three friends worked in near silence. Then there was the sound of muffled hammering, accompanied by peculiar scraping noises. It went on for quite a while, punctuated by low-voiced curses as, now and then, a hammer missed its target. Once, there was a loud clatter as someone kicked something.

Nearly two centars later, adhesive, hammers, nails, and folding ladders were stuffed back into the packs. Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer lingered for a centon, regarding their handiwork. It looked perfect. And it bore their unmistakable signature.

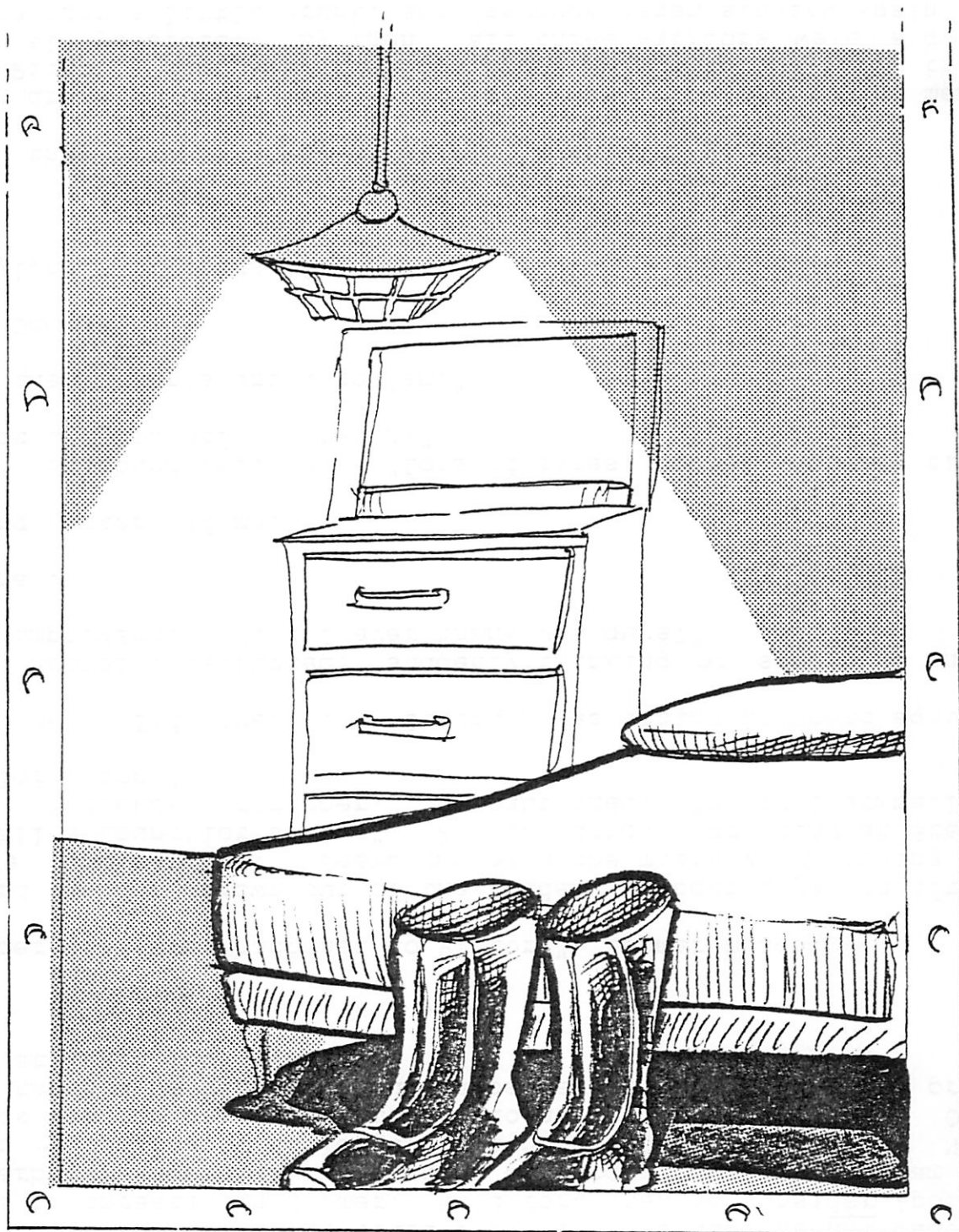
"Let's go," Apollo warned at last. "We don't want anyone to see us here."

The next morning, word of what had been done to Cadet Pictor spread across the Academy grounds like a sunburst. In almost no time at all, everyone knew and was laughing over the unpopular young man's "lesson". There was an unmistakable flair to it -- only Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer would have dared such a thing. But no one mentioned their names. Especially Pictor. He was afraid to.

When Cadet Pictor had returned to his quarters after class that night, he found everything exactly as he'd left it -- with one significant difference. Everything was upside down. Not merely turned over. His quarters were completely upside down -- on the ceiling...

Books, lamps, even a comb and a spare pair of boots, every object was in place -- secured in place with adhesive. Every piece of furniture -- tables, chairs, bed, everything -- had been neatly

Handwritten signature or mark.



and carefully nailed to the ceiling. Even the edges of the bed cover were neatly tacked down. The only thing on the floor was the ceiling light fixture.

It was an obvious warning, and Pictor knew who'd done it, although there was no way he could prove it. Perhaps he had made a mistake in threatening Boomer. He'd forgotten to consider Apollo and Starbuck; together, those three were too formidable a team to take on -- unless he could get something on the other two? No. Starbuck was too careful. And Apollo never made a mistake. Oh, well, there'd be others. But maybe he'd better keep a low profile, at least for a while.

* * * * *

"I wonder what ever happened to Pictor?" Boomer mused.

"I heard he was thrown out of the Academy, about a yahren after we were commissioned. Seems he made the mistake of trying to blackmail a Councilor's son." Apollo turned, grinning at Starbuck. "Starbuck, remember," he cautioned, "never blackmail a Councilor's son."

"Who? Me? I'd never..." Starbuck was acting innocent again.

"Say," Boomer interrupted, suddenly thinking of something that seemed important. "Did I ever thank you guys?"

"For what?"

"Getting Pictor off me."

"Sure," Starbuck replied. "Lots of times, Boomer. Every time you shot a Cylon off our tails."

"Well, then, let's drink to 'em."

"Who, Boomer?"

"The Cylons, of course!"

"Huh?"

"Well, they give me a way of stayin' even with you."

So they drank to the Cylons -- after a fashion. And to the memory of Pictor's famous upside-down rooms -- and to the nails that made it all possible. By then, all three Warriors were a good bit more than a little drunk, and Starbuck began singing again -- considerably more off key than earlier. Apollo grimaced and put his hands over his ears in mock agony.

"Starbuck! Please! With that voice, you're gonna get us all in trouble!" Boomer did an excellent imitation of a man suffering some terrible torment.

Apollo, no longer able to restrain himself, began laughing helplessly. Starbuck, breaking off in mid-chorus, joined in. For the next few microns, the three friends laughed uncontrollably.

Then Starbuck, with considerable effort, assumed his most innocent expression. Looking downright angelic, he said, "I never get in trouble."

"Starbuck," laughed Boomer, "you never get in trouble because you always are in trouble! And we," he said, indicating Apollo and himself, "always get in trouble trying to get you out of it!"

"Never!" Starbuck exclaimed, assuming an injured air. Then, "Really?"

"Always!" Boomer replied, trying to keep a straight face.

"Uh-huh," Apollo concurred. "As long as I've known you..." He chuckled. "You know, you even nearly managed to prevent our getting commissioned."

"Did I? Really?"

"Uh-huh. I seem to remember a little jaunt you took during a training flight just before graduation..."

* * * * *

With only three sections left before they became full-fledged Colonial Warriors, assigned to the battlestar GALACTICA, Cadets Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer were understandably excited. The Academy computers had certainly made no mistake in assigning the three of them as a student unit. They'd proven to be the best students in the Academy's long and distinguished history -- even if their sometimes unorthodox behaviour frequently surpassed the limits of military protocol.

Over the past yahrens, the three young cadets had proven their academic and military skills again and again, until they'd built up quite a reputation with the Academy staff. Their reputation among their fellow cadets was somewhat different, of course, but no less impressive. Brilliant, daring, and totally unpredictable, Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer would begin their formal military careers with quite a record behind them.

Just now, the cadets were making final preparations for a training flight, just the three of them -- a solo flight out to Virgin, then around the sun and back past Aries and Taura before returning in four centars to Caprica. Their Vipers had all been carefully checked out by the flight crews; everything was ready.

The three soon-to-be-Warriors put on their helmets and climbed into their cockpits. The Academy control center transferred control to the Vipers, preparatory to launch.

Apollo was in command. Somehow, that seemed natural.

"Ready, Boomer?"

"Ready."

"Starbuck?"

"All set."

"Then let's show the Academy a proper launch!" Apollo's thumb came down decisively; his Viper hurtled skyward. Starbuck and Boomer followed.

The launch, like all their earlier ones, was virtually perfect. Within microns, the three Vipers were out of Caprica's atmosphere, free of her gravity, and streaking through clear space.

"Scanners?"

"Active," Starbuck and Boomer both responded.

"Virgon is in Quadrant Alpha, sector three. Set your course."

Boomer obeyed instantly. Two Vipers curved to their new course as one. But only two.

"Starbuck, is anything wrong? Starbuck?" Apollo was concerned, but not overly so. He knew his friend was an excellent pilot.

Starbuck didn't answer. His Viper swung off onto a different course.

"Starbuck?" Still no response. Apollo was no longer worried; he was annoyed. That Viper was unmistakably under complete control.

"Starbuck, where in Hades' hole do you think you're going?" Apollo's voice, too carefully controlled, betrayed rising anger. If Starbuck deliberately messed up this flight...

Starbuck still didn't say a word. He knew Apollo wouldn't like it -- but he wasn't about to miss his big opportunity. His Viper raced on.

"Starbuck..." In that micron, Apollo sounded ready to strangle his erstwhile comrade.

Apollo and Boomer watched as Starbuck's Viper streaked at top speed directly away from their planned course, heading toward the planets Sagittara and Gemini. Wherever he was going, they'd have to bring him back.

"Frak!" Apollo was really angry now. "Boomer, set a new course. We're going after him."

In the Academy control center, there was near panic as first one Viper, and then the other two, suddenly took off in a direction opposite to that programmed by the flight instructors. All three

fighter craft disappeared from the scanners. What in Hades was going on?

Apollo and Boomer were asking themselves that same question as they followed Starbuck down to the surface of Gemini. What in the name of the Lords was he up to?

By the time they landed alongside the third Viper, Starbuck had vanished.

"Where'd he go?" Boomer wondered.

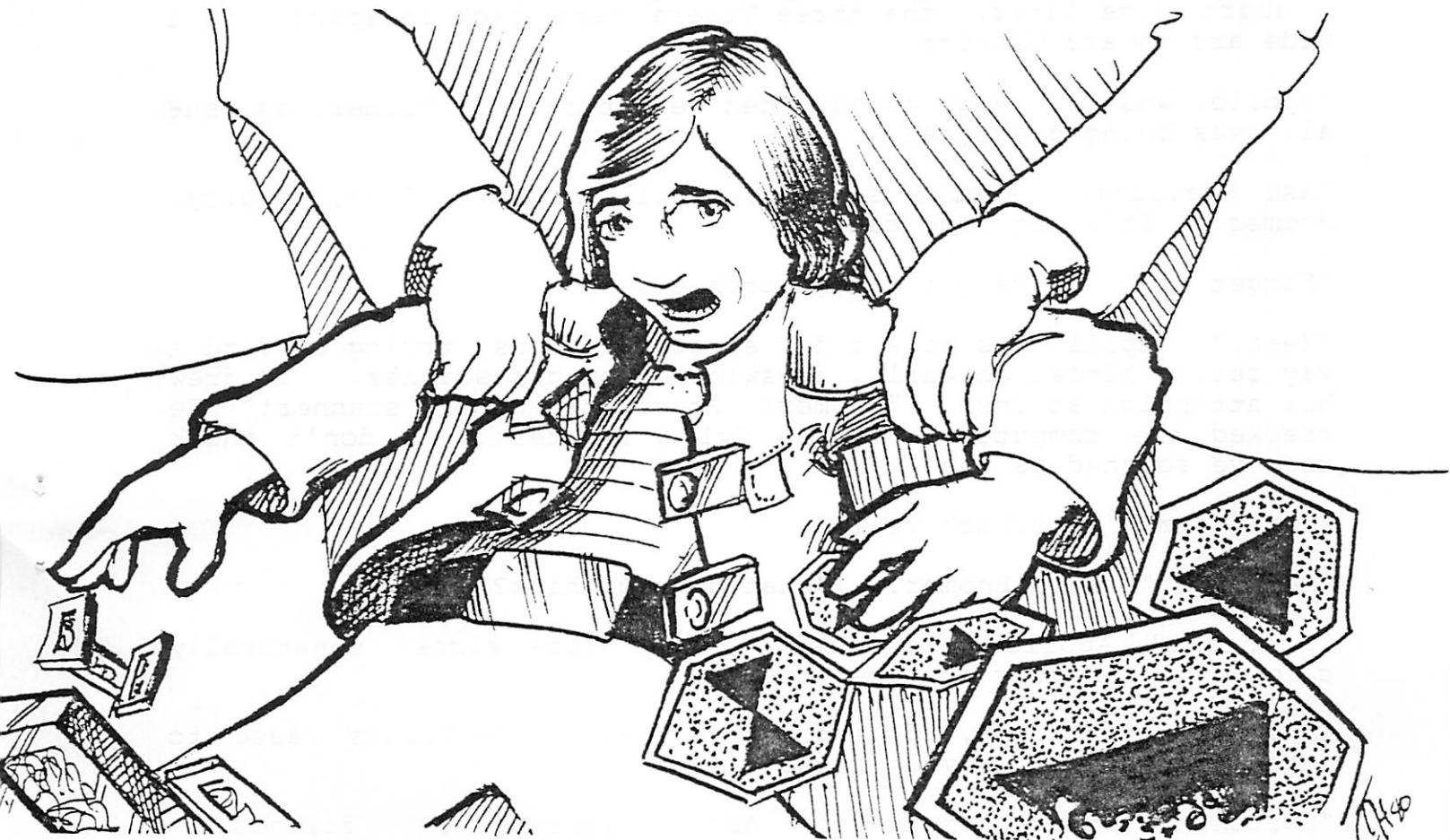
"Don't know. But we've got to find him. Fast."

They'd landed just outside a fairly large town. It was Starbuck's most likely destination. They'd start their search there.

They found the casino just over a centar later. And Starbuck. He was at a pyramid table, a large pile of golden cubits in front of him. From his expression, he was obviously winning. Apollo and Boomer stared in amazement.

"I don't believe it!"

Apollo shook his head. "Neither do I. Come on." He led Boomer through the crowded room. They split up silently, approaching Starbuck from opposite directions. He was so engrossed in the game he didn't see them coming. They each grabbed an arm.



"Let's go, Starbuck."

"Apollo! What're you doing?" Starbuck complained as his friends hauled him toward the exit. He began to struggle, objecting strenuously to being taken from his moment of triumph. "You can't do this! I'm winning! I can't quit now! I've got this system... I can't lose!"

Apollo and Boomer ignored his protests and dragged him from the casino. Once outside, Apollo turned on him.

"Just what do you think you're doing, coming here while we're on a flight? You're jeopardizing your entire future, just for a card game! Don't you realize they can bring us all up on charges for this? Throw us out of the Academy? Starbuck, have you completely lost your reason?"

Starbuck didn't know what to say. He hadn't expected Apollo to be this angry.

"Well, what do you have to say for yourself?"

"I... I'm sorry," Starbuck stammered.

"Sorry? Is that all you...? Oh, frak!" Furious, Apollo turned away and started back to the Vipers. Boomer still clutched Starbuck's arm as they followed him.

A short time later, the three Vipers were back in space, on a wide arc toward Caprica.

"Apollo, what're we gonna say when we get back?" Boomer, as usual, was being practical.

"Ask Starbuck," Apollo snapped, still angry. Then, "Sorry, Boomer. It's not your fault."

"Forget it. We've got enough problems."

"Yeah." Apollo was silent for several centons, trying to find a way out. Almost absently, he switched on his scanner. It drew his attention at once. "Boomer! Starbuck! On the scanner!" He checked the computer. "Three Cylon fighters. I don't think they've scanned us yet."

"I see 'em!" Starbuck yelled.

"Me, too!" said Boomer. "What do you think?"

"I think," Apollo said quietly, his voice almost unnaturally calm, "we'd better go after them."

In perfect formation, flying as one, the three Vipers raced to intercept the small Cylon force.

"Switch on attack computers," Apollo ordered. His friends o-

beyed, acknowledging the order even as they did so.

"Must be a recon patrol," Apollo mused. "They'll scan us soon enough."

"Let 'em!" Starbuck was eagerly looking forward to a fight.

None of the cadets had ever been in combat, but they all knew what to do. The Cylons, realizing they'd been detected, maneuvered to fight. The Vipers, handled by skilled, if inexperienced pilots, easily outflew them.

"I've got him on the left," Apollo called. His Viper peeled off after a Cylon ship.

"I've got 'im on the right." Starbuck's voice was almost an echo.

"I guess that means I get the one in the middle." Boomer acted even as he spoke, firing on the center Cylon ship.

In the Academy control center, there was near pandemonium. First, their three cadet pilots had disappeared; now they were back on the scanners -- and chasing three Cylons! Everyone clustered nervously around the scanners. As the Vipers closed to firing range, everyone seemed to hold his breath. Three cadets! No matter how good they were...

Then there were only three objects on the scanners.

Out in space, there were three nearly simultaneous explosions, as three Cylon ships disintegrated. And three young cadets were cheering as they turned their Vipers toward home.

* * * * *

"We were lucky," Boomer observed.

"Lucky? It wasn't luck," Starbuck objected. "It was skill."

"I'm afraid I have to agree with Boomer. We were far too inexperienced. The Cylons should've had us. That unholy luck of yours saved all three of us."

"Uh-uh. It was skill. We surprised Hades out of 'em. Skill."

"Starbuck, it was just plain luck I remembered..."

"Enough, you guys! Enough!" Boomer protested, laughing. "It's not worth arguing about. Luck or skill, we went back to Caprica as heroes, didn't we?"

"We sure did, Boomer."

"It's kind of strange, being called a hero when you're still only a cadet," Apollo remarked. "Gives you a lot to live up to."

"Well, we haven't done too badly, have we?" Starbuck observed. "And no one ever got around to asking what we were doing in the wrong quadrant, either. They were all so thrilled over our having offed the Cylons..." He laughed reminiscently.

"Yeah," Boomer said. "But you never did tell us why you took off for Gemini like that. How'd you know about the casino, anyway?"

"Oh, I hear things, Boomer." Starbuck was looking innocent again, a sure sign he was anything but. "I hear things."

"Starbuck..."

"Okay! Okay! One of the Gemonese cadets told me about the place, said there'd be a big game there. It just happened to coincide with our flight schedule. And I'd worked out this foolproof system. So..."

Apollo shook his head, laughing. "Starbuck, how many 'foolproof' systems have you tried?"

"Oh, a few. There are some little flaws to be worked out..."

"You mean, like in your behaviour?"

Apollo was teasing him, and Starbuck knew it. He assumed a positively angelic air. "My behaviour?"

"Yes, your behaviour. Like that time we visited my parents, and you drank so much ambrosia Boomer and I had to pour you into my father's hovermobile."

"Well, I was a little nervous, you know."

"A little nervous? Starbuck, I've never seen you so terrified -- except around Athena." Apollo knew his sister scared Starbuck, who was convinced she was out to capture him -- permanently.

"Apollo, back then, just the idea of being in the presence of the famous Commander Adama used to have the cadets quaking. Just because you were never afraid of him..."

"So you drank enough ambrosia that you wouldn't feel nervous." Boomer was laughing. "Did you know the Commander helped us carry you out?"

"Honest?"

"Uh-huh." Boomer nodded vigorously.

"Apollo?"

"He really did, Starbuck."

For a micron, Starbuck had the good grace to look embarrassed. Then he, too, started to laugh. This was quite a celebration...

And they were all getting happily drunk together, just like they used to.

Grinning happily, Starbuck signalled for another round of ale, which promptly appeared. "Here's to skill," he said, raising a mug. He was determined to have the last word in the argument, even if it had been over for centons.

"And luck," Boomer added, glaring at Starbuck.

"Luck," Apollo said quietly. The others stared at him, surprised by something odd in his voice.

"Apollo?" Starbuck shot Boomer a worried look. Had they somehow, without realizing it, gone and undone all the good they'd accomplished? Apollo looked kind of strange.

"Luck..." Apollo barely whispered the word. Turning to Starbuck, he murmured, "That infernal, unholy, wonderful luck of yours..." He drained the mug of ale, set it down heavily. "It saved me once..."

* * * * *

"Starbuck, I've been looking all over for you."

"Boomer?" Starbuck was lying beneath a tree with his head in a very feminine lap. "For Sagan's sake! Can't I enjoy a pleasant spring afternoon without..."

"This is important," Boomer interrupted. "I need to talk to you. Now." He glanced pointedly at Starbuck's attractive blonde companion. "Alone."

Grumbling, Starbuck mumbled an excuse to the lady and got to his feet. "This'd better be good." He followed Boomer along a deserted walk. "All right. What's so important?"

"Apollo's in some kind of trouble."

"Huh? You're crazy!" Starbuck turned away, starting back toward his pleasant afternoon.

Boomer grabbed his arm. "Starbuck, I am not crazy. And Apollo is in trouble -- bad trouble."

He sounds worried, Starbuck thought. But -- Apollo in serious trouble? That wasn't possible. Boomer might get in trouble. Starbuck might get in trouble. But Apollo? Never! "Tell me about it."

"I don't know what it is, but he's been confined to quarters pending some sort of investigation. And there's a Security type at our door."

"Security? That's ridiculous! Apollo would never do anything to

warrant that."

"You know it, and I know it. But apparently the Commandant doesn't."

"What'd Apollo say?"

"Nothing. He says nothing's wrong. He's not a very good liar."

Starbuck's mind focussed instantly on the problem. "Well, I know a few people... Meet me at the landing field fence in a centar." Without another word, Starbuck headed for the Academy office complex, his pleasant afternoon completely forgotten. If Apollo had been confined to quarters, under guard, it must be serious. He was going to find out what was going on.

Exactly one centar later, Starbuck met Boomer just outside the landing field. Now Starbuck, too, looked worried.

"Apollo's been accused of breaking into Major Vega's office and stealing a copy of the Advanced Strategy exam papers. Vega's aide says there's already enough evidence for a tribunal."

"Apollo never stole anything in his life!"

"I know. His sense of honour wouldn't allow it. But apparently someone saw him, or someone who looks like him, sneaking out of the office complex last night."

"But..."

"I smell a set-up, Boomer. And I'm going to find out who's responsible. Come on. Let's talk to Apollo."

Apollo wasn't in the mood to talk. He'd never felt so wretched in his life. He knew he hadn't done anything wrong, but how was he going to prove it? Especially when the only person who could prove his innocence had already lied to the investigators.

Starbuck burst in on his despair like a supernova. There was something about his attitude that was contagious.

"I didn't know anything about those stolen papers until Security started asking questions this morning," Apollo said. "They told me they had a witness..."

"Look," Starbuck said. "We know you'd never steal anything. But if we're going to clear you, we'll need some information."

"But I don't know anything about..."

"Where were you last night?"

"With a second-yahren cadet named Priam. I met him at one of Sinon's parties. He asked if I could explain a couple celestial

navigation problems, so I went to his quarters. I was there nearly four centars. But he told the investigators he hadn't seen me."

"Apollo, Priam is one of the most devious bastards at the Academy." Starbuck often marvelled at his friend's innocence. "And, since obviously no one bothered to tell you before, he's a very close friend of Mulciber's."

Mulciber! Apollo looked stunned. If he could be said to have an enemy, that enemy would be Mulciber. It was a little like Starbuck and Ortega -- they were rivals in everything. Because Apollo consistently beat him -- in grades, in simulated Cylon kills, in triad, and in far more personal matters -- Mulciber had developed a real hatred for him. It all began to make sense.

"Don't worry, buddy!" Starbuck suddenly exclaimed. "I got an idea!" Without another word, and without giving Apollo or Boomer a chance to ask for an explanation, he dashed out the door.

Starbuck really did know Priam fairly well -- and he knew a few things about him that Priam would definitely not want known by the Academy staff. He went directly to Priam's quarters...

"Starbuck, how in Hades did you do it?" Boomer demanded later that night, after Security informed them all charges against Apollo had been dropped.

Starbuck pulled a cigar from his sleeve, lit it, and lounged back in his chair. "Oh, I didn't do so much..."

"I'd like to know, too," Apollo said quietly.

Starbuck studied Apollo out of the corner of his eye. He still seemed very subdued, moody. Well, Starbuck knew how to take care of that...

"Okay, you asked for it. Like I said before, I know Priam. The sneaky little daggit's been running a lottery on our triad games for nearly a yahren. And he's been making huge piles of cubits, conning some of the, uh, less honest players into throwing games. He just happened to approach me once, told me what he wanted. And I told him..."

"What, Starbuck?" Boomer's grin threatened to split his face.

"Now, now! You don't really want me to use that kind of language, do you?" He grinned. "Anyway, I just went to Priam and said, unless he told the truth to the investigators, I'd expose his little game. After all," -- he was looking extremely innocent again -- "it's not legal."

Apollo had to laugh. Starbuck, with his angelic little-boy look and his larcenous heart, talking about legality!

Well, Starbuck thought to himself, that takes care of Apollo! He continued his story.

"It turns out Mulciber asked Priam to get Apollo somewhere alone last night. Then Mulciber broke into Vega's office. Priam told the authorities Mulciber -- not Apollo -- visited him last night. That gave Mulciber an alibi." He paused to savour his cigar. "And there really was a witness, a cadet who saw someone leaving the office complex. He said he thought it was Apollo..."

"But why?"

Starbuck considered Apollo thoughtfully. "Well, you and Mulciber are about the same build, the same general colouring. And..." He paused dramatically.

"And what, Starbuck?"

"Priam bribed him, of course." He ducked a thrown boot. "Now, how about a drink?"



* * * * *

Depressed by the memory of the only time anyone had seriously questioned his integrity, Apollo stared into his mug. "I suppose Mulciber and Priam both died on Caprica."

"No great loss if they did," Starbuck commented.

They sat in silence for a time, each man concerned with his own melancholy thoughts. "One last drink," Apollo said abruptly, breaking the silence. "To honour."

Starbuck and Boomer echoed the toast, although neither was very enthusiastic. Then, somehow, Apollo got to his feet.

"Let's call it a night," he said. He wasn't sure he could get back to his quarters and, from the looks of them, Starbuck and Boomer were in no better condition. Besides, he wasn't in the mood for a celebration any longer.

Boomer, however, waved a hand at the barman. "Just one more," he said.

Starbuck looked from one to the other as Apollo started to object. It wouldn't do to have Apollo acting moody and depressed again. Thinking fast -- possibly faster than when he was sober -- Starbuck reached out to grab at Apollo's arm. He missed the first time, caught Apollo on the next try. He assumed his most angelic expression.

"Boomer's right, Apollo. It's only fair."

"Fair?"

"Well, I know we've drunk to honour. And we've drunk to our friendship and to the GALACTICA and the Lords only know what else. At least, I think we have. But we've missed the most important thing of all."

"And what's that, Starbuck?" Apollo wasn't about to give in this time; he really thought they'd all had enough. But he was curious. And he was just drunk enough to miss the significance of Starbuck's innocent expression.

"Why, my new pyramid system, of course. It can't lose!"

Starbuck was utterly hopeless! Apollo gave up and sat down again.

"So now we're gonna drink to a pyramid system? I don't believe it!"

"Beats not drinking, Boomer," Starbuck observed.

So they all drank to Starbuck's new system, which couldn't lose but probably would anyway, and the melancholy vanished.

But it was late, and Apollo was still convinced they'd all had quite enough to drink. Maybe more than enough. Boomer was having trouble keeping his head off the table; Starbuck was finding it difficult to raise a mug far enough to drink from it; and Apollo was seeing everything through a fuzzy golden mist. It was definitely time to bring the festivity to an end, while they were still able to walk. Assuming, that is, they were still able to walk.

"Maybe you're right, Apollo," Boomer said. "We haven't gotten drunk together in a long time, though. I remember, the last time

we got this drunk, we nearly got thrown out of the Academy..."

* * * * *

In a crowded bar just off the grounds of Caprica's Military Academy, three young men were gathered around a dark corner table. Like most of the Academy's other senior cadets, they were more than half drunk, celebrating the end of their Academy careers. In the morning, as part of Caprica's Armament Day observances, they would be commissioned as Colonial Warriors. And they had a second cause for celebration -- they had all been assigned to the battlestar GALACTICA, under the flag of Commander Adama. They were delighted at having been assigned somewhere together. The GALACTICA was considered the finest warship in the entire Colonial Fleet; Adama, the finest commander.

Always brilliant, frequently unrestrained, and totally irrepressible, the three young men at that corner table had together gained an impressive reputation with their instructors and their fellow cadets. Over the yahrens they'd been together as a student unit, they'd been involved in one wild escapade after another. Only their undeniable skills and abilities had saved them from expulsion time and again.

"We've actually done it!" Starbuck exulted. "One more night, and we're Warriors!"

"In spite of ourselves," Boomer chuckled.

"Very much in spite of ourselves," Apollo amended. "And we're leaving quite a record behind us. I don't think we'll be forgotten, not for a long time."

"There ought to be one last thing we can do for them to remember us by."

"Just what do you have in mind, Starbuck?"

"Oh, I don't know. Nothing special. But I'm sure we can think of something."

They spent several centars trying to think of something appropriate. While thinking, they also drank; by the time they decided what to do, they were all very drunk indeed. They rejected numerous possibilities; most suggestions were things they'd already done, or things that were too ordinary, too commonplace. One or two were simply too risky for the crowds that would be present in the planet's capital next morning. They finally decided on simplicity.

"The Commandant's shuttlecraft will land in the middle of the parade ground after all the cadets are in ranks. Nearly everyone in the city will be watching. We'll paint something on it tonight. When he sees it in the morning, the Commandant won't have time to remove the paint -- or get another shuttle. He'll have to use it."

"What'll we paint on it?"

"I don't know. Something obscene, maybe. But prominent enough that no one could miss it."

"Okay, Starbuck. But where do we get the paint? Especially at this center?" Apollo asked.

"I know where some's stored. Boomer, if you can pick a lock..."

"Are you kidding?"

"Then let's get going."

Only a few centons later, the three young men were in a storeroom filled with cans of paint. There was enough paint to decorate an entire battlestar! Two battlestars! Each cadet gathered as many containers as he could carry and made his way to the landing field.

The Commandant's shuttle was in a hangar, fortunately unguarded. Starbuck's luck again, Apollo and Boomer both thought. It was probably the most coherent thought any of them was capable of having. They were tripping over their feet as they approached the hangar.

"Oh, frak!" Starbuck stumbled into something in the dark.

"Shh! Starbuck, if anyone hears us..." Apollo whispered.

Starbuck muttered something in response; it went unheard. Apollo set down his load of paint and tried the hangar doors. They were unlocked. He slid the doors open a crack. The hangar was dark; no one was there. He signalled the others to enter, went back for his paint, then closed the doors behind him. Starbuck found a light control.

"There she is," Boomer whispered.

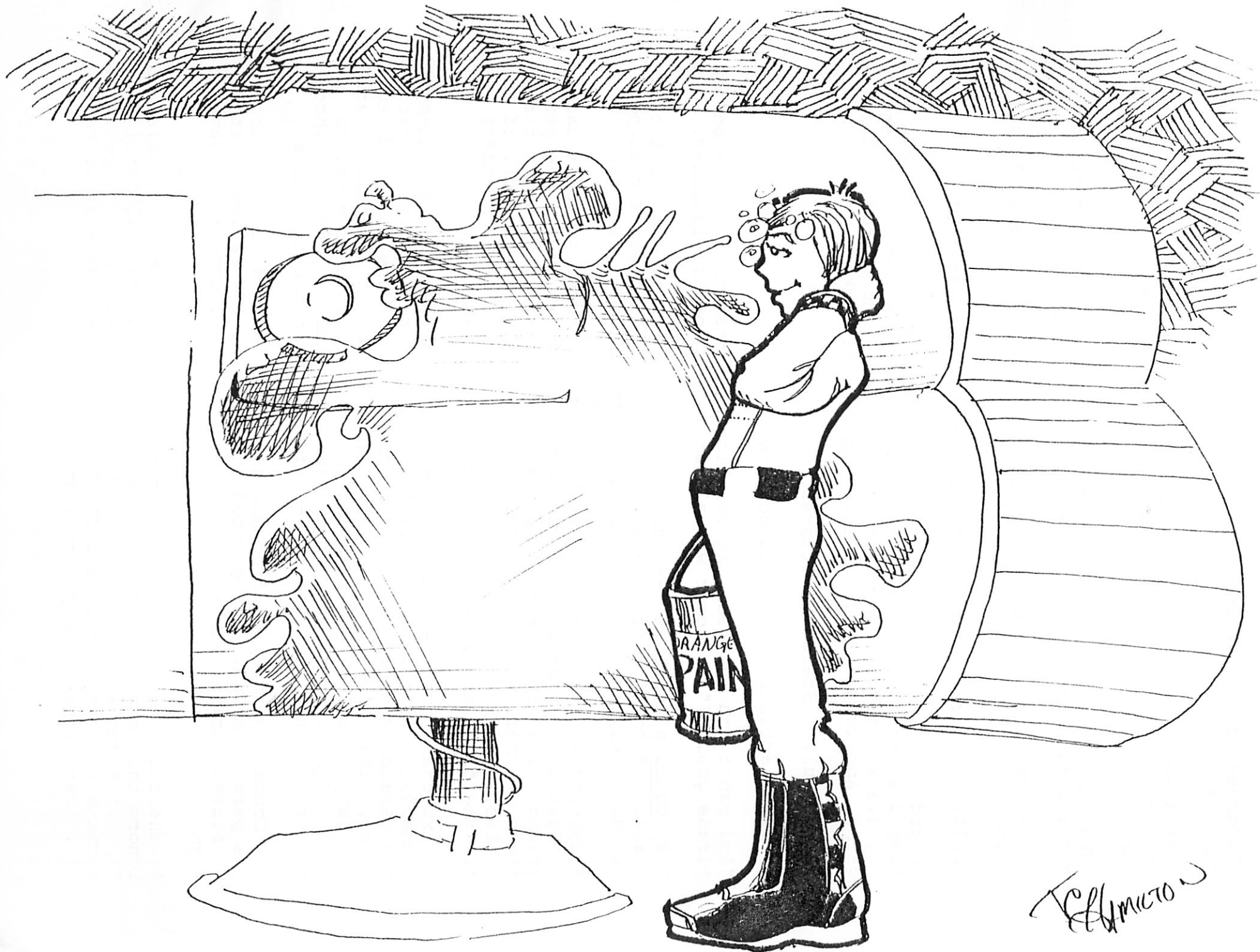
"Let's get to work."

Starbuck pried the lid off his first container, picked it up, and lurched toward the side of the small shuttle. He wasn't sure what he was actually going to do with the paint yet, but it would come to him. Then he stumbled, and the contents of the can splashed across the side of the shuttle, creating huge orange splotches. "Oh, frak!"

Apollo and Boomer witnessed the accident with some dismay. But those patches of bright orange paint did look rather neat...

Without a word, Apollo and Boomer opened containers, ran toward the shuttle, and hurled the paint at their target. Luckily, they both missed Starbuck.

The ~~three~~ men stood back for a centon to admire the effect.



Tell me now

Splotches of purple and orange paint seemed to glow on the shuttle's sides.

"Let's see what else we've got," Boomer suggested. They started prying off lids. More orange paint. And purple. And orange. And...

"What in Hades do you suppose the Academy was going to do with nothing but purple and orange paint?" Starbuck wondered.

"There must have been other colours in the storeroom," Apollo said. "We just missed them."

"Well," remarked Boomer, "I rather like the effect."

So did his friends. Unanimously, they agreed to continue what they'd started. It seemed only a few centons before the entire shuttle was covered with patches of purple and orange. Once again, Apollo, Starbuck, and Boomer stood back.

"Beautiful," Starbuck muttered.

"Supreme artistry," Apollo observed.

"And can't you just see the reaction when that thing lands on the parade ground?" Boomer was almost choking on his laughter.

They could picture it -- the cadets, the civilians, the officials. Soon all three were clinging to one another for support, laughing helplessly. The giggles continued well past dawn.

Hangovers were common the next morning, as three thousand cadets struggled into dress uniforms and made their way to the parade ground. The air itself seemed festive as they lined up in formal ranks. There were huge crowds everywhere. The Council of the Twelve, Caprica's planetary officials, the Fleet commanders -- all the dignitaries were on the reviewing stand.

An expectant hush fell as the shuttlecraft bearing the Academy's Commandant drifted down to land lightly in the precise center of the parade ground. As it approached, there were gasps of surprise, then waves of laughter. The cadets, at attention, dared not laugh openly, but here and there one could hear a snicker or two. The dignitaries on the reviewing stand stared in shock, horror, dismay, amusement -- depending on the individual.

The Commandant stepped from his shuttle, marched silently across the parade ground, and mounted the steps to the reviewing stand. He stared straight ahead. If he noticed the laughter, he gave no sign.

As the cadets began to march in review, the Commandant tried to ignore the muttered comments around him. But he couldn't ignore Caprica's representative on the Council, who also happened to command the battlestar GALACTICA. Commander Adama stood beside him, very stern, very formal and correct.

"Purple and orange, Commandant? Why?" Adama's voice could have frozen a sun.

Embarrassed, the Commandant tried desperately to think of a way to avoid answering. He failed. "A cadet prank, Commander."

"Oh?" Adama paused. He had a pretty good idea who was responsible, but... "Who?"

Hesitantly, the Commandant answered, "I believe there were three cadets involved, sir. I'm only guessing..."

"Their names?" The tone of command couldn't be ignored.

"Well, I believe one of them was, uh, Cadet Starbuck, Commander."

"And?"

Reluctantly, "Cadet Boomer, sir." He definitely did not want to give the third name.

Adama sighed. If those two were involved, he knew... "And the third was my son."

"I, uh, didn't say that, sir."

"No. But you didn't have to." Adama, whose eyes had never left the marching cadets, spotted Apollo, then Starbuck and Boomer. Those three looked incredibly pleased with themselves. The Lords help the GALACTICA, he thought. "What do you suggest we do about this, Commandant?"

"Well, sir, I don't really know... I mean, there's no proof..."

* * * * *

"And they never knew, never even suspected!"

"Never! Or we'd never have graduated!"

Starbuck and Boomer collapsed across the table, convulsed with laughter. Apollo hated to disillusion them...

"I don't know how to tell you guys this," he began. He sounded deadly serious, but Starbuck saw the laughter in his eyes. "You don't know how close we came. I'm afraid they knew all along."

"What!"

"Impossible!"

"No one could prove anything. But the Commandant guessed from the start. And my father knew."

"If they'd known, why didn't they...?" Boomer was incredulous.

"You sure?" Starbuck still didn't believe it.

Apollo nodded solemnly.

"How do you know?"

"Well, a few yahrens later, my father and Athena and I were all home on furlon together. It was when Zac got his commission. You two were on patrol then, I think."

Starbuck and Boomer nodded.

"We had a kind of family celebration that night, just the five of us. You know, all the children in the Fleet, that sort of thing. It got to be quite a celebration. And there was a lot of ambrosia. An awful lot..." Apollo's voice trailed off.

"What happened?" Starbuck urged.

"My father had a little too much to drink and..."

"The Commander?" Boomer found that hard to believe.

"Apollo, you have got to be kidding!" Starbuck found it utterly impossible to imagine Adama getting drunk.

"No, it's true. I swear it."

Starbuck and Boomer both knew Apollo would never swear to anything that wasn't true. But that didn't make it any easier for them to picture the commander of the GALACTICA as anything but perfectly sober. Still, if Apollo actually swore to it...

Starbuck shrugged. "Okay. If you say so, buddy. Go on."

"Well, he told us a lot of stories about his own days at the Academy, and later at the Military Institute. And he told us what he knew about the purple and orange shuttlecraft. He and the Commandant were together on the reviewing stand, and the Commandant admitted he suspected us but didn't have any proof."

"And the Commander?"

"He said the micron he saw that shuttle, he knew we'd done it. No one else would have dared. The Commandant's suspicions just confirmed his own."

"Well," Boomer began, "if they knew it was us, why didn't they do something about it?"

Apollo chuckled. "No proof, remember? My father said he figured the GALACTICA would cure us of such pranks. Or maybe we'd wind up painting her..."

That was a ludicrous picture. A purple and orange battlestar? Incredible! They all began to laugh. It was several centons be-

fore any of them could speak again.

"And, Starbuck," Apollo began, "when we went after that base star at Carillon..."

"Purple and orange squadrons!"

"Right! I was afraid I'd start laughing and give us away to the Cylons."

"The Commander must've heard us, too! No wonder you tried to shut me up. He'd've had a fit!"

"Thank the Lords Athena didn't give us away." She'd probably forgotten the stories that night, Apollo thought; she hadn't been too sober, either. "All she reported was the GALACTICA didn't have purple and orange squadrons. But my father knew it had to be us. He said no one else could possibly have dreamed up such an outlandish..."

"So that's what really happened. I've always wondered."

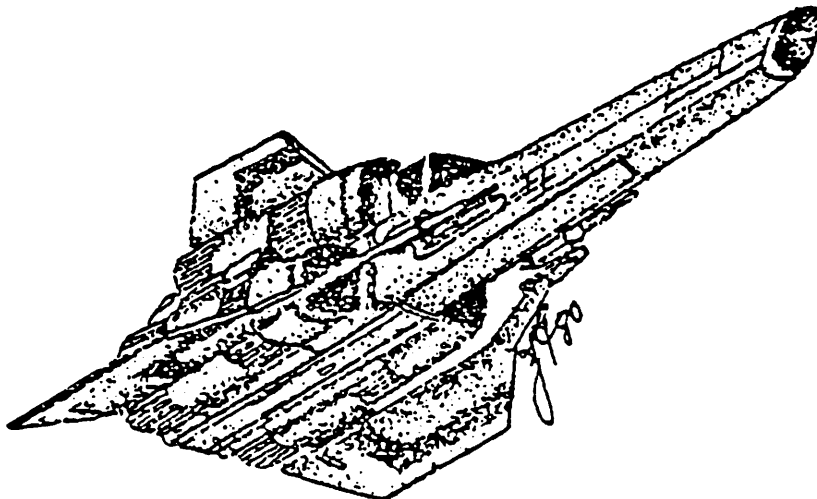
The all-too-familiar voice cut through their drunken fog. How much had he heard? They could all be in serious trouble...

Boomer, being Boomer, tried to appear nonchalant. He almost succeeded.

Apollo straightened in his chair, trying to look at least a little like the Warrior he was supposed to be. After all, he was expected to set an example. He didn't make it.

Assuming his most innocent, most angelic air, Starbuck looked up at the Colonel. Anyone not knowing Starbuck would have believed him incapable of even a devious thought. "Uh, Colonel Tigh, sir. It's not the way it sounds. Uh, sir."

Tigh wanted to laugh but didn't dare allow himself even a faint smile. In his most formal, most precise military voice, he said, "It never is, Starbuck. It never is."



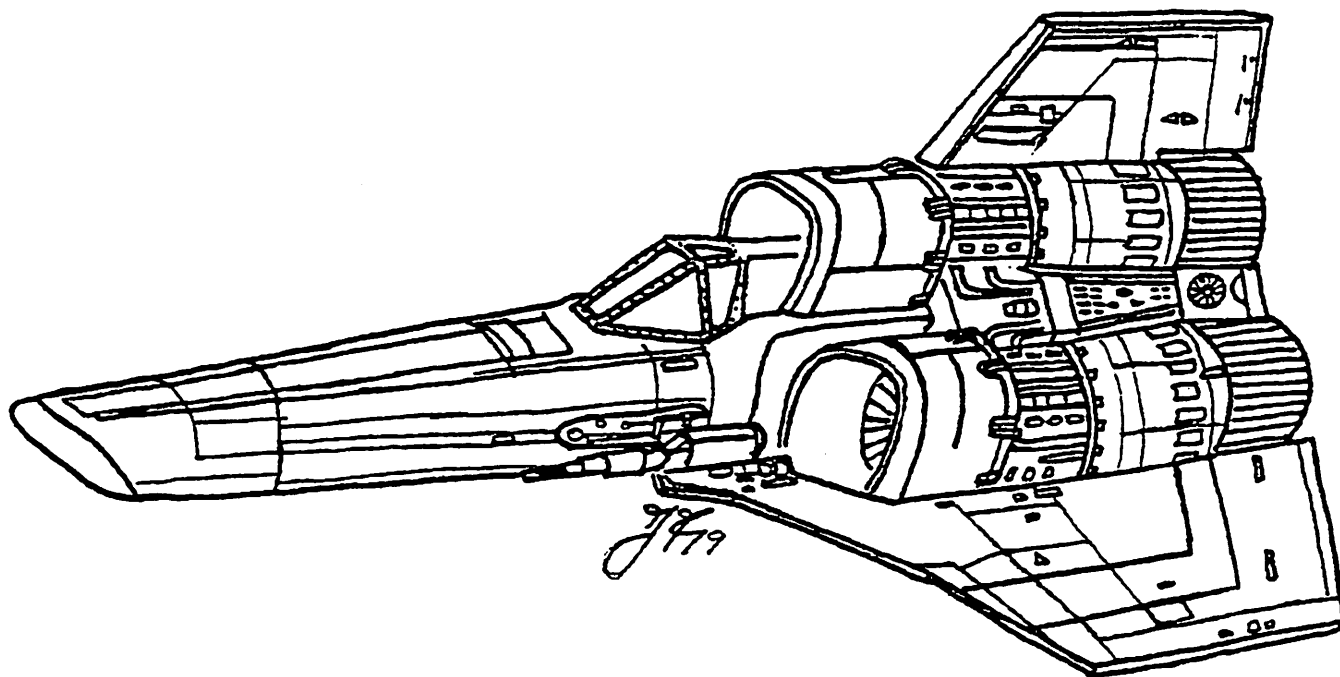
untitled poem
(By Leah Bestler)

my world revolved around a soft and gentle place
where lion and lamb,
dragon and child,
slept,
and dreamed fanciful dreams of tomorrows and yesterdays.

my world revolved around a soft and gentle place
'til one day when
silently, darkly,
creepily came
goblins bearing Hate, and Hurt, and Pain, and caused

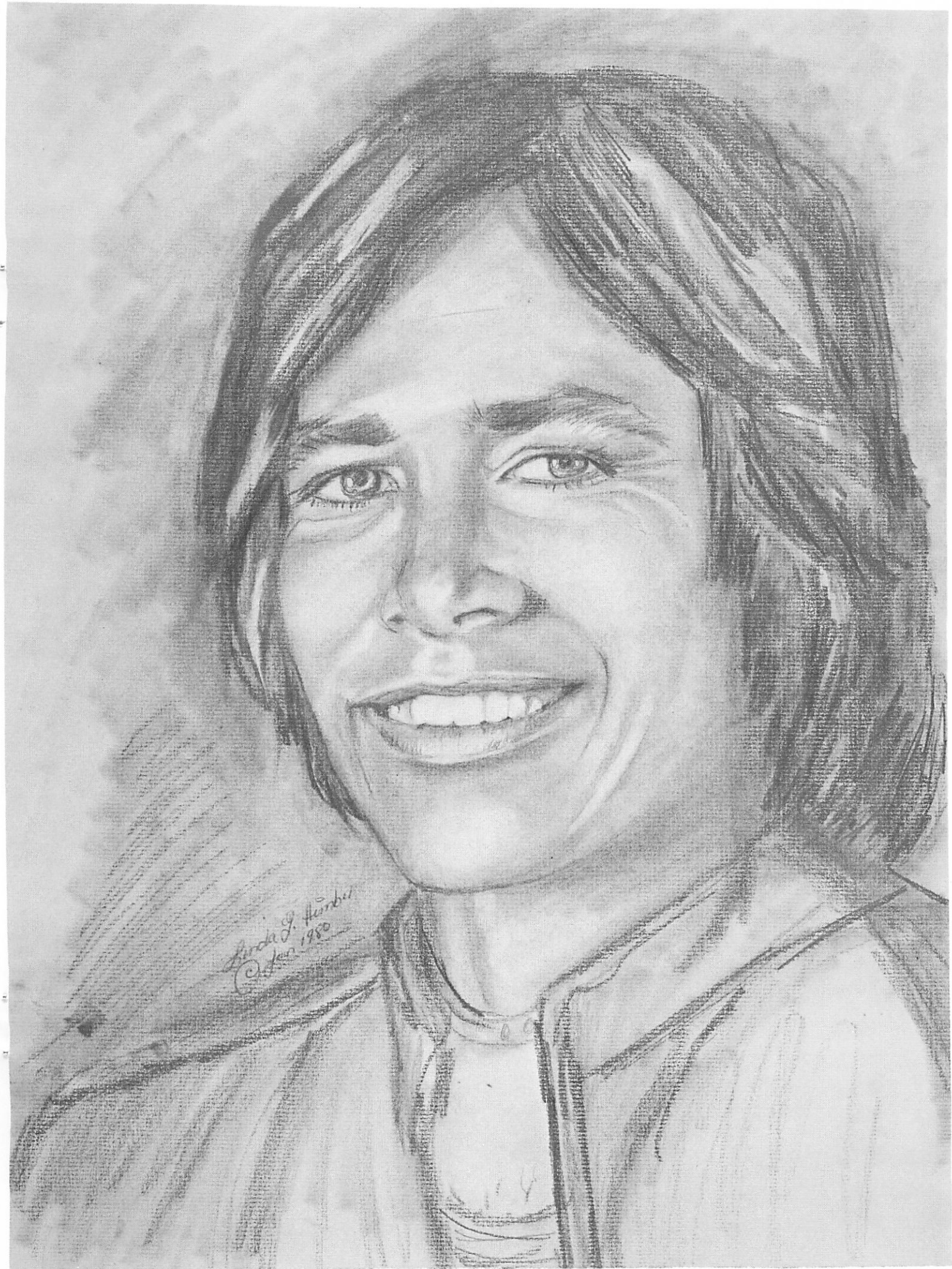
the lion to learn to kill
and the dragon to flame
and the lamb to cower
and the child to weep at the intrusion, and at the realisation
that in hating them for what they'd done,
he had become like them,
Horribly, sorrowfully,
just like them.

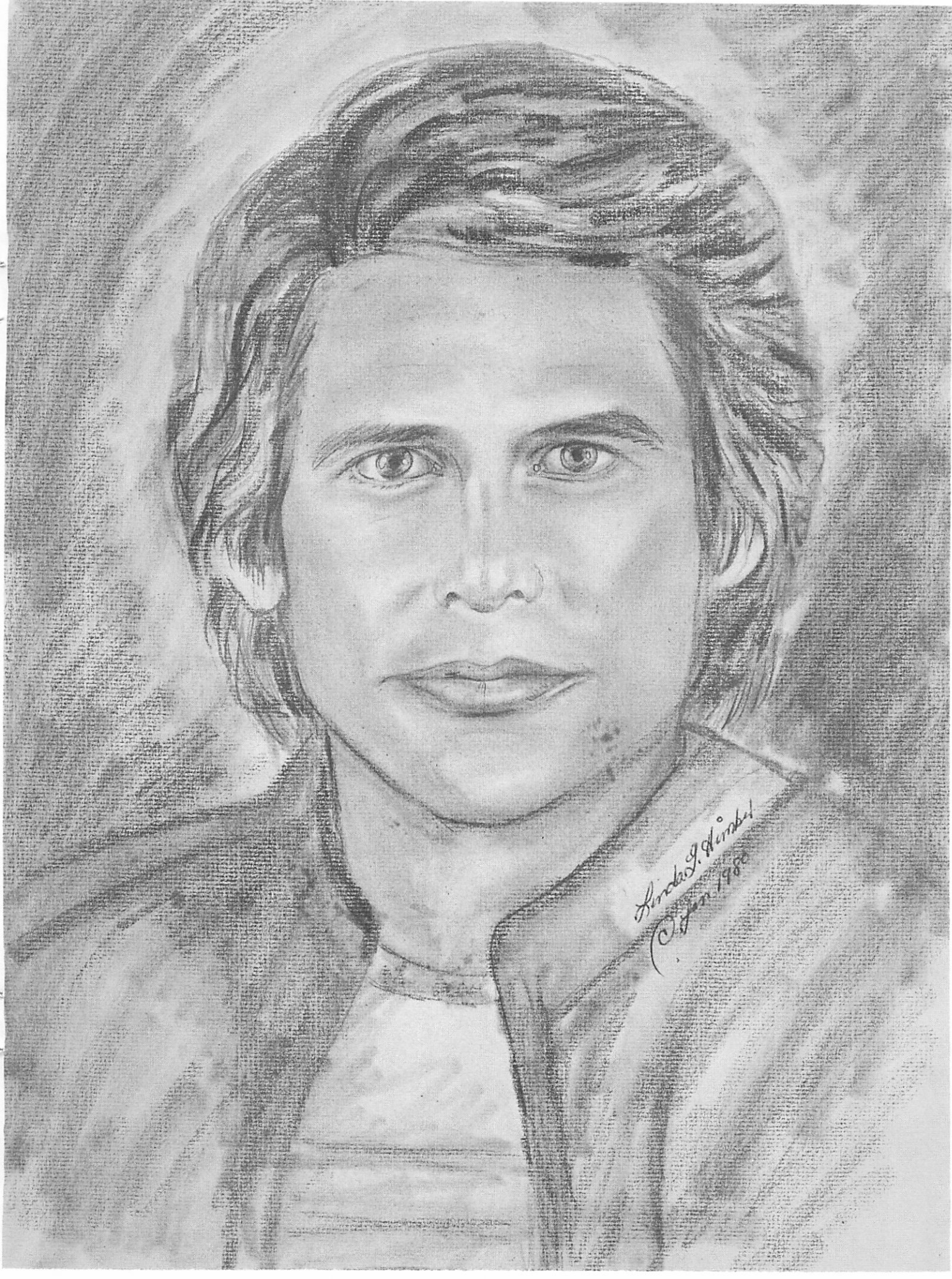
my world revolves around a once soft and gentle place
where lion and lamb,
dragon and child,
huddle together for protection, all suspicious of one another,
praying for the day it will all be over so again,
together,
they can dream.

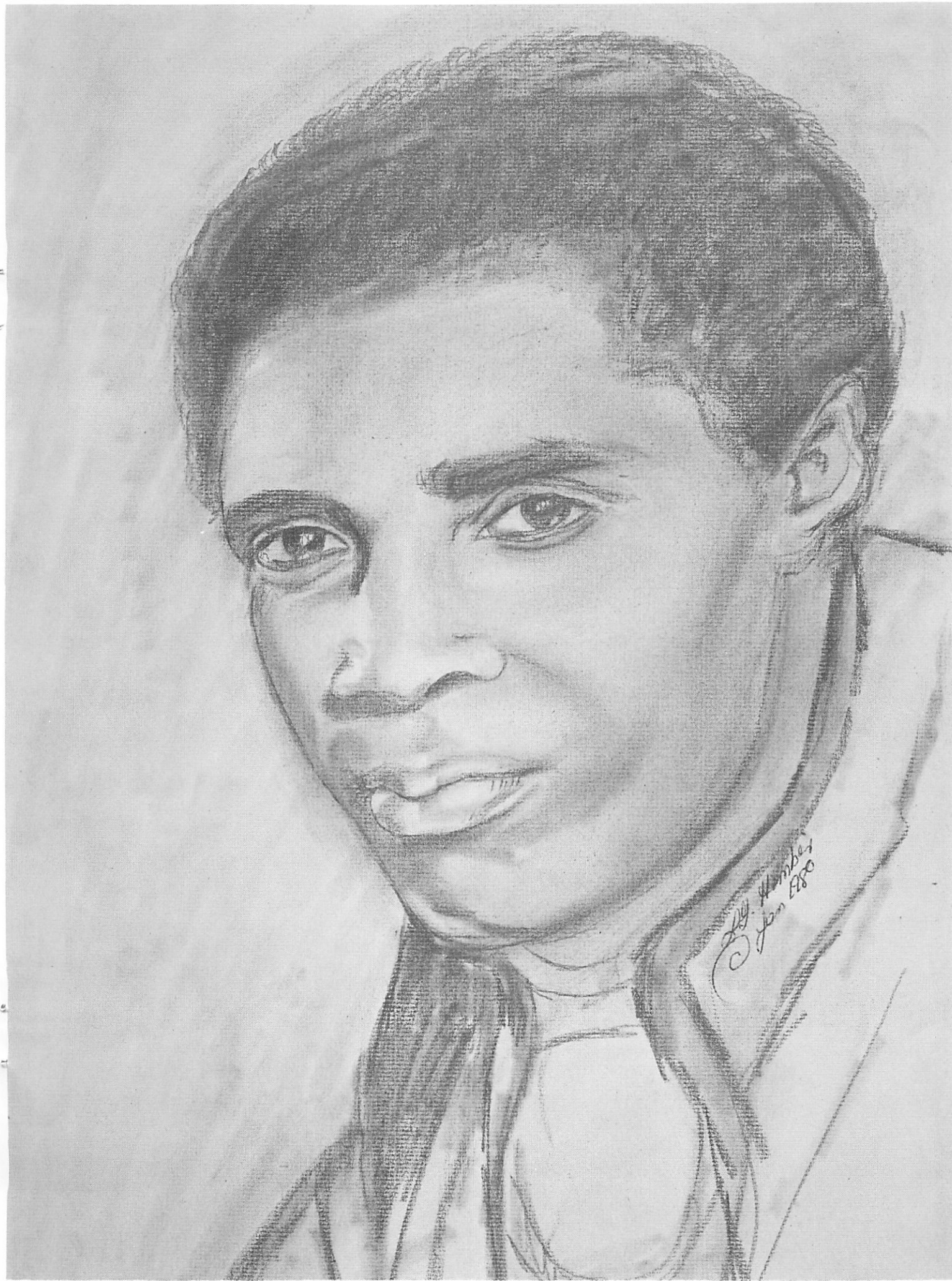


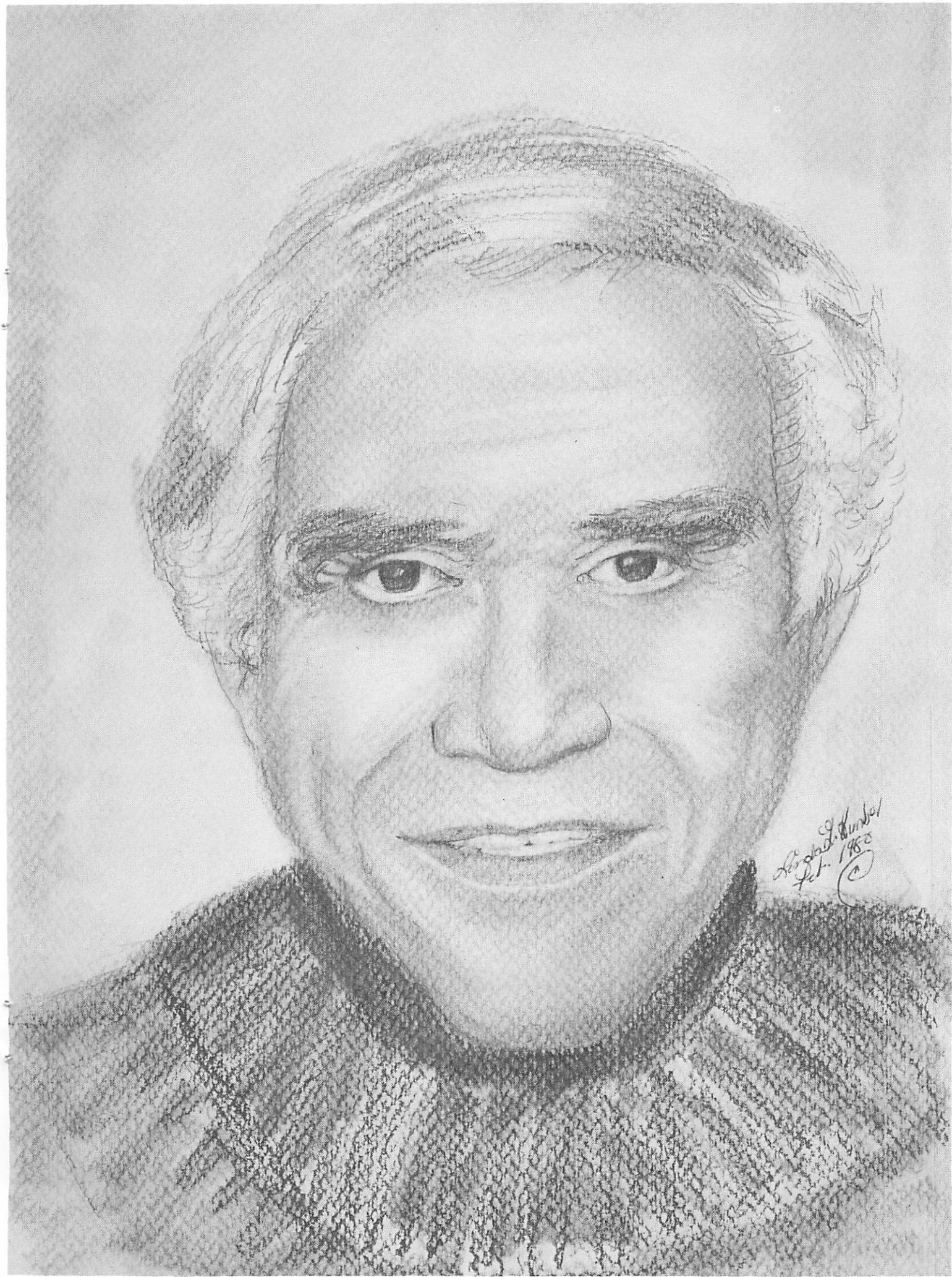
"Purple and Orange" is pleased to present the first in a collection of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA portraits by artist Linda George-Himber.

These portraits are being presented in a format suitable for framing. They can be removed from this issue of "Purple and Orange" without affecting the integrity of the publication.









IMPORTANT ADDRESSES

Given the current somewhat nebulous state of affairs with regard to BATTLESTAR GALACTICA, our readers may find the following addresses of some value.

Universal City Studios, Inc.
100 Universal City Plaza
Universal City, California 91608

- Mr. Glen A. Larson

ABC-TV
1330 Sixth Avenue
New York, New York 10019

- Mr. Fred Pierce
President, ABC-TV
- Mr. Anthony Thomopoulos
Vice President, ABC-TV Entertainment
- Mr. Dan Rustin
Manager, Audience Information

ABC-TV
4151 Prospect Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90027

NBC-TV
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10020

- Mr. Fred Silverman
President, NBC-TV

CBS-TV
51 West 52nd Street
New York, New York 10019

- Mr. John D. Backe
President, CBS-TV

Since most of our readers are in the Chicago Metropolitan Area, we include the following local addresses.

Mr. Edward Spray, Program Manager
WBBM-TV (Channel 2)
630 North McClurg Court
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Mr. Doug Knight, Program Manager
WFLD-TV (Channel 32)
300 North State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Mr. Harry Trigg, Program Manager
WGN-TV (Channel 9)
2501 West Bradley Place
Chicago, Illinois 60618

Mr. Jeff McGrath, Program Director
WLS-TV (Channel 7)
190 North State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Mr. Richard Lobo, Program Manager
WMAQ-TV (Channel 5)
Merchandise Mart Plaza
Chicago, Illinois 60654

Mr. Peter Strand, Program Manager
WSNS-TV (Channel 44)
430 West Grant Place
Chicago, Illinois 60614

MCA has acquired the first season of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA for syndication to local television stations; the package consists of twelve two-hour episodes. We suggest you contact the programming managers of your local television stations for more information on this. If they have not yet obtained the GALACTICA package for broadcast, we suggest you write to them and urge them to do so.

Sealing Ceremony

By Pat Beese



Art by Paulie

PAULIE

"Sealing Ceremony"

(By Pat Beese)

Starbuck stood in front of the altar in his dress uniform. He ran his hand through his hair for the tenth time and decided that, without a doubt, he looked like the biggest damn fool he had ever come across. He fidgeted, and ran a finger under his collar. Lords, but he hated dress uniforms!

He wiped his hands down the sides of his pants. His palms were sweating rivers. He couldn't remember being this nervous, this uncomfortable, this scared, ever! Not even a Cylon base star turned his knees to jelly like this!

All he had to do to escape was to turn around and walk out. It would be so very simple! Just turn around, and walk out. So why couldn't he move? Why were his legs made of rubber and his feet made of lead? Just turn, you damn fool, and walk! He stayed in place as if he was planted there.

All too soon, there was a soft chord of organ music, and people began to move toward him. There was Sheba, coming toward him in some kind of shimmery blue dress, looking less like a Warrior than he had ever seen her before. Apollo appeared at his shoulder from out of nowhere. Commander Adama walked to the foot of the altar, resplendent in his full command uniform, wearing the symbol of the Council of the Twelve. Apollo and Sheba met, then moved off to one side. There was a momentary hush, then a triumphant chord of music, and Chameleon, guiding a radiant and glowing Cassiopeia down the central aisle, began to move toward Starbuck.

Cassiopeia had never been so beautiful. Her gown was white, and as light as a dusting of snow. It hovered around her the way a cloud would play around a Viper when it entered an atmosphere. A small bit of filmy veiling clung to her curls, adding the perfect touch of softness to her face. Her eyes were brilliant; they shot electric sparks when she looked at him.

After what seemed an eternity, Chameleon and Cassiopeia finally reached Starbuck, and Chameleon made quite a show of handing Cassiopeia to the thoroughly frightened Warrior.

Starbuck took Cassiopeia's hand, smiled a very watery smile at her, and the two of them turned to face Adama and the altar.

In his best stentorian tone, Adama began the ceremony. "Do you each agree to release your care into the keeping of the other?"

A dry croak out of Starbuck's throat: "No. Not yet."

Adama looked shocked. "What?"

Starbuck had found his voice. "I said, 'No'." No, no, no, no, no...

"No, no, no." Someone was shaking Starbuck by the shoulder, and none too gently. "No, no."

"Starbuck! For Sagan's sake! Wake up! Starbuck! You're gonna wake the whole damn squadron!" Boomer's voice echoed hollowly in Starbuck's fuzzy head. "What are you yelling about, anyway? In all the yahrens I've bunked with you, I've never known you to talk in your sleep before."

"Boomer, I just had the narrowest escape I've ever had." Starbuck sat up, and swung his legs over the edge of the bunk. His head was pounding.

"Running from a Cylon, huh?"

"Nope. Running from Cassiopeia. I told you before we went that I don't like to go to sealing ceremonies. They give people crazy ideas."


"And I told you this afternoon before we went to the ceremony that you shouldn't drink so much ambrosia that we'd have to carry you back. Lot of good it did."

"Aw, Boomer, you sound just like Apollo. Besides, I didn't drink that much. It must have been the cake."

"Anybody who would eat three pieces of cake on top of all that ambrosia deserves nightmares." Boomer crawled back into his bunk. "You know, Starbuck, you really ought to get sealed to Cassiopeia. Then we could get some sleep around here."

Starbuck slid back into his bunk. A wicked, lascivious smile crossed his face. "Someday, Boomer. And when I do, it'll be me who isn't getting any sleep!"





Chicago's first
Science fiction center
the New Fantasy Shop
5651 W. Belmont
Chicago IL

Toys,
Magazines,
Pocket Books,
Posters,
Buttons,
Plus collectors comics,
movie posters, movie stills

HAMPTON

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The "Purple and Orange" staff is happy to announce the birth of Heather Noelle Breo on 30 November 1979. Heather's parents are George and Cheryl Breo (also known as Commander Christopher and Major Meret of the battlestar OSIRIS), special consultants to the staff of "Purple and Orange" and owners of the New Fantasy Shop in Chicago. Heather has four older sisters: Patricia Lee (15), Deborah Anne (14), Michelle Denise (8), and Tabitha Kristine (6).

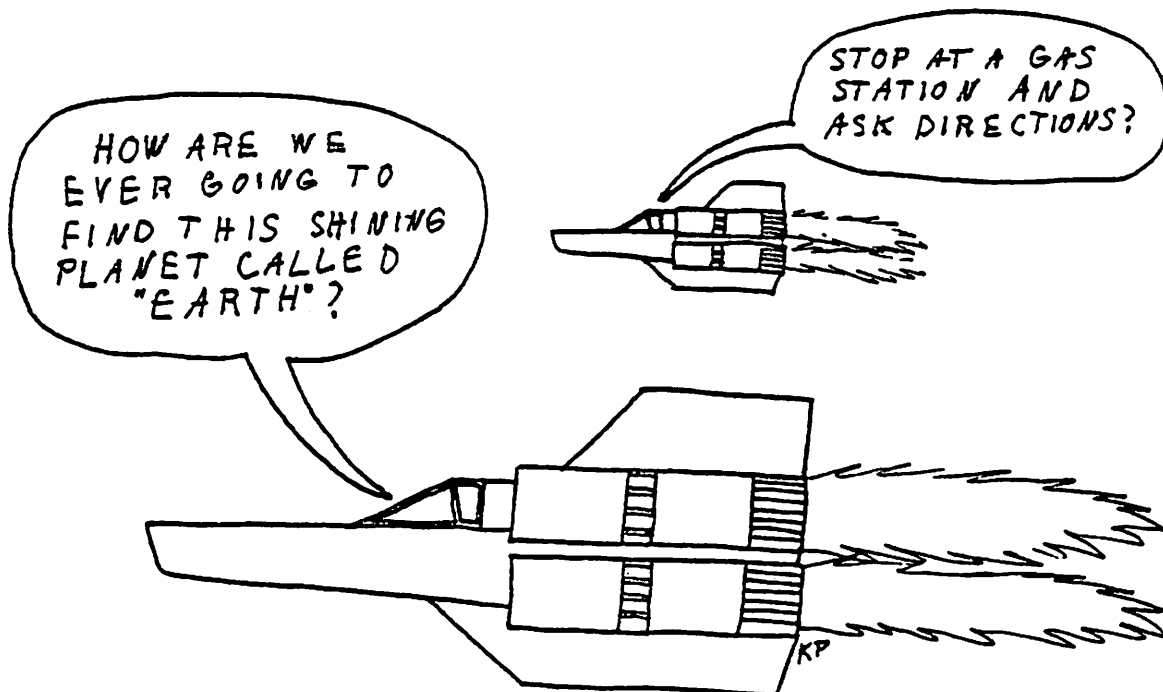
Welcome aboard, Heather. May your life be a long and happy one!

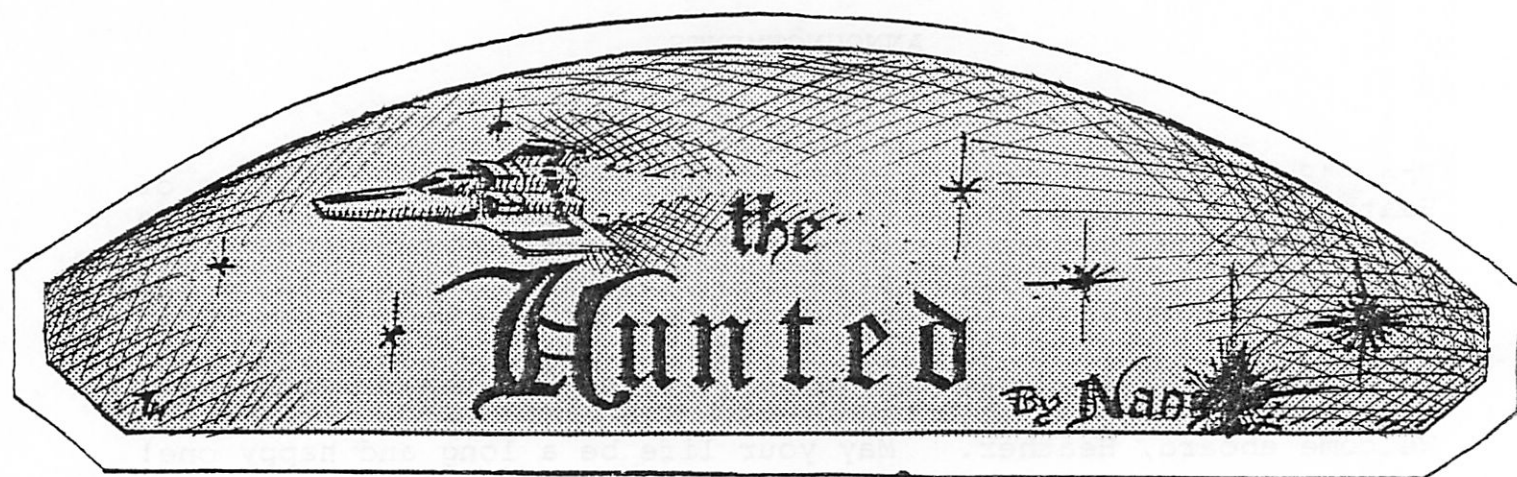
* * * * *

"Purple and Orange" is delighted to announce the winner of our BATTLESTAR GALACTICA TRIVIA CONTEST, held in conjunction with the opening of the New Fantasy Shop in Chicago last year. The winner is Pam Kaniuk, of 4747 West Byron Street in Chicago.

Congratulations, Pam. We didn't think anyone would get that last one -- but, yes, it was indeed 683.947182 ergons. Did you have a tape? Or just a fantastic memory?

* * * * *





Three Vipers cut across the azure sky, passing over the lone hunter as he devoured his prey. He tried to watch them; they were unlike anything he had ever seen, and surely no rote-teller had ever sung of such noisy birds that flew so fast on unmoving wings. They were gone over the ridge before he could get even one good look.

Unaware of the hunter below, Apollo had his attention largely fixed on his scanner. The valley the GALACTICA had pinpointed as a major center of possibly intelligent life was coming up fast. He was doing some hard thinking about the local "people." Never had the scanners reported "possibly intelligent life." They had always registered either sapience or non-sapience. According to design specifications, a "maybe" wasn't possible. Which wasn't very comforting when a "maybe" was what they had.

The three ships had already passed over several areas that had been targeted as possible villages. There hadn't been any sign of intelligent life. The small, steep-sided, rocky valleys held no cities, not even primitive huts. There was no energy output. There wasn't even fire. Above all, there were no life forms. Still, the cockpit scanners showed "possible intelligent life" below. Below ground, maybe?

Apollo's study was interrupted as the Vipers swung out over open land. A meadow ran to and beyond the center of the target area. It was the best place to put the ships down. They landed as close to the target as possible.

Starbuck stood on the wing of his Viper and looked around. Except for Apollo and Boomer, the place appeared empty. The land rolled gently downward toward another of the valleys. A deep green grass, short and tough-looking, covered the ground. There were a couple of precariously-balanced boulders sticking up from the meadow. That was all.

Starbuck jumped down from his perch and trotted toward the others. As he passed close to the nearest of the balanced rocks, he heard a creaking noise. Startled, he looked around and realised the rock was leaning toward him -- fast. The total surprise of it held Starbuck rooted for a couple of microns. Belatedly, he realised if he didn't move, the thing was going to fall on him. He jumped aside as the massive stone crashed onto the spot he'd so recently occupied.

Apollo and Boomer joined him, relieved to see he wasn't hurt. The three spent several centons checking the area and the rock itself, trying to see what had caused it to fall. They learned nothing. It was Boomer who found the small pile of etched bones lying about the rock's own length behind it. Whatever had eaten the creature must have exuded a fairly strong acid, to leave such thoroughly etched slivers behind. So now they had a dangerous predator to watch for. Warily, the three Warriors started for the valley, the question of what had unbalanced the rock unanswered and at least temporarily postponed.

Frustrated, the hunter and his partner watched them go. They were hungry, and these new creatures smelled so good -- and moved so fast.

The Warriors stood openly on the rim of the valley. As with the other possible areas they'd flown over, this was a narrow but deep slash in the land. The steep sides were covered with boulders. Some of these were lying flat on the slope, but most were delicately balanced, much like the pair back by the Vipers. Again, there was no sign of anything they could identify as an intelligent being. Their portable equipment gave the same frustrating "maybe" as the Vipers' scanners and the GALACTICA's bridge monitors.

Boomer suggested an underground city, and for a few centons that looked like a good guess. Careful readings, however, clearly showed whatever they were picking up was on the surface.

Time was running short. They'd come a long way from the Fleet to try and locate these "people," to warn them of the Cylons and see if they had usable metals and foodstuffs. Here, where there should be a city, there was nothing.

They ventured a short way down the slope; but something, possibly the slight jar of their own footsteps, upset the carefully balanced rocks, causing them to fall. They all had close brushes with the tottering boulders, and the lack of positive results made the risk unreasonable. Reluctantly, they abandoned their search.

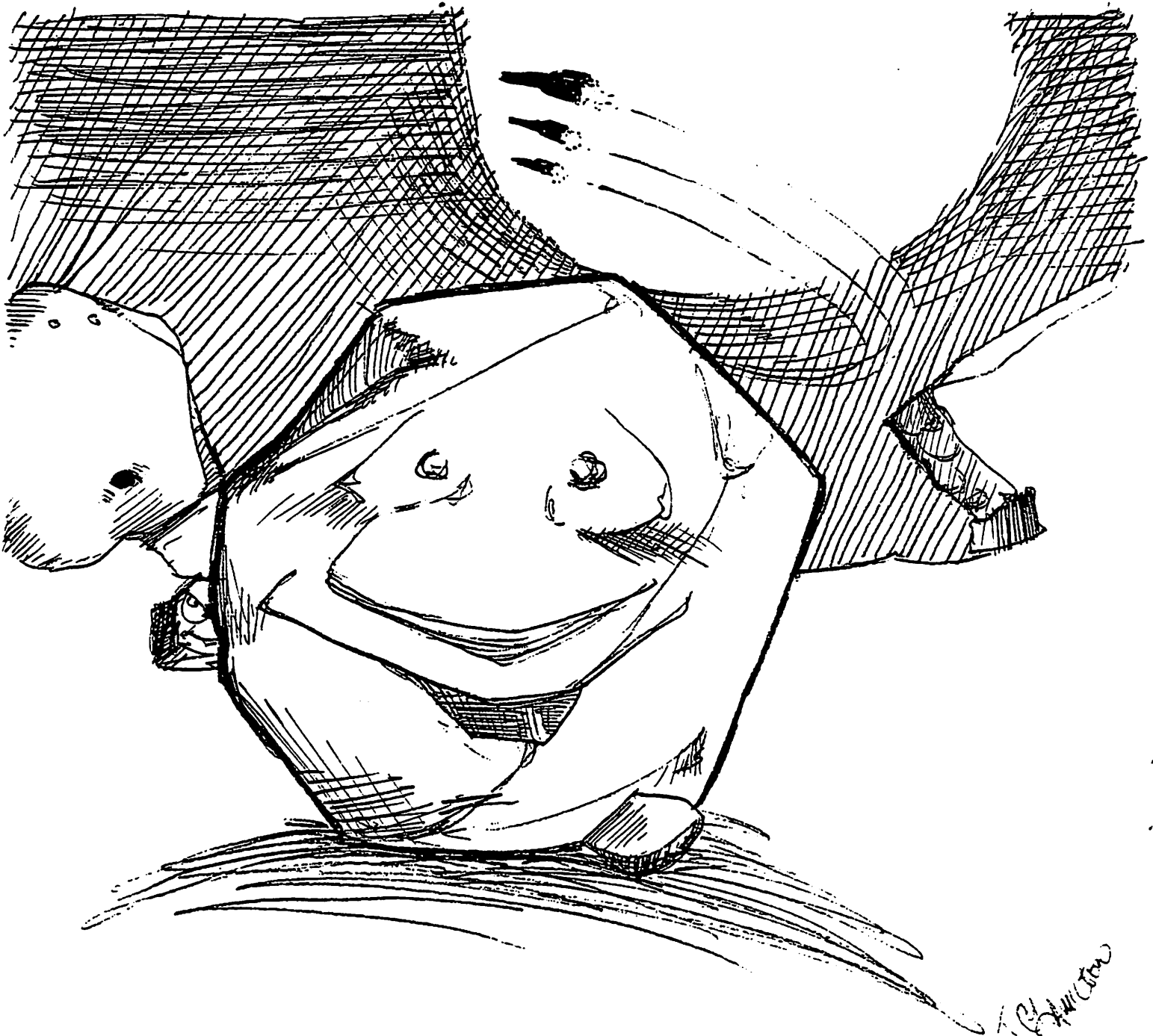
The questions remained. Who had balanced the rocks? Why? How had it been done? Most of all, where were the beings who had done it?

There were no answers.

The Warriors didn't like to leave riddles unsolved. But the Fleet was drawing farther away by the centon, and there were no quick answers. Apollo bowed to necessity and ordered Starbuck and Boomer back to their Vipers. They had their scanner tapes and a string of annoying questions -- and that was all.

* * * * *

It would be several thousand yahrens before another spacefaring race visited that nameless planet. When they came, however, the beings they would call the Stonepeople of Tirgenth would tell them the tale of a visit by three delicious-smelling bipeds who came in metal birds and moved too fast to be eaten.



LETTERS

At last, we're beginning to hear from our readers. How about the rest of you? You claim to like "Purple and Orange", so how about writing and telling us so? We all need a pat on the back now and then...

Dear Purple and Orange People,

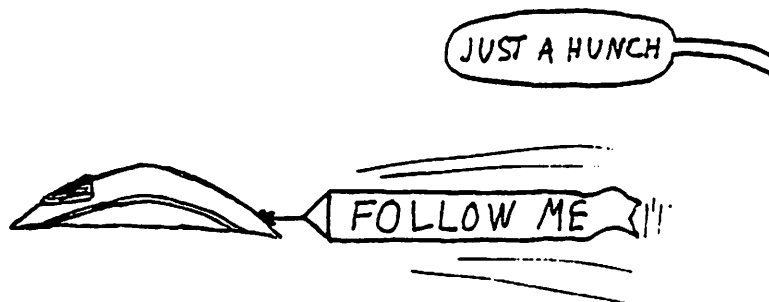
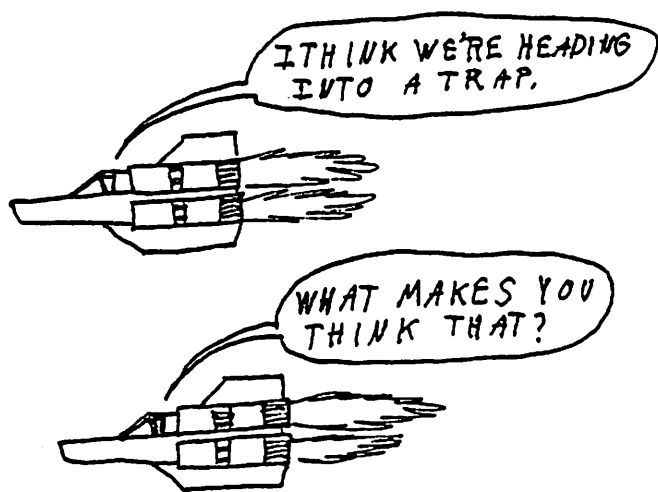
At NorthAmericon I picked up a copy of your second issue... Did I mention how much I liked "Purple and Orange"? Obviously, since I'm offering to buy more, I liked it. What particularly? The poem, the synopses, the story by Ben Thomas, Colonel Lyra's Log, "The Last Episode"...

'Nuff said. Hope this makes it through the Christmas rush okay.

Yours,

Anne Cecil
Kettering, Ohio

Thanks for the praise, Anne. We need it -- it's good for all our staff. And we'd love to see some of what you've been writing. Why not submit something for us to print?



KAREN PAULI

Dear "Purple and Orange",

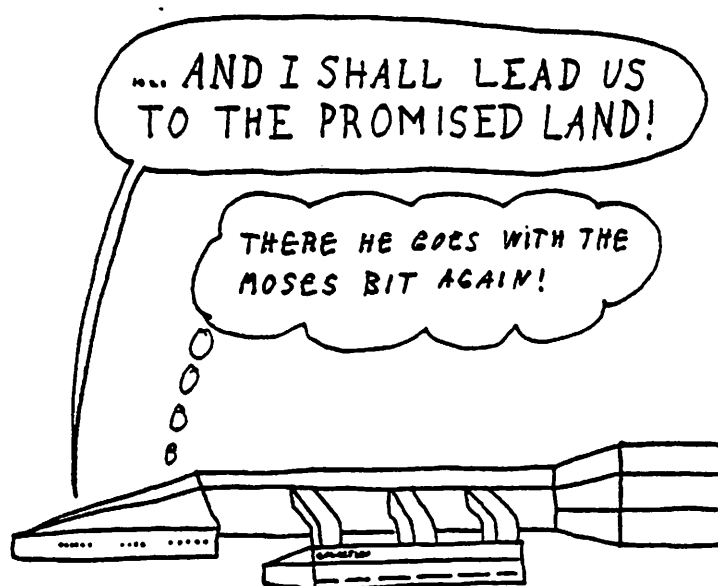
We are fans of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA and truly enjoyed your "Purple and Orange" publications. Unfortunately, we are not able to get any issue of it after the third. The New Fantasy Shop is where we purchased the first three. When we went back for the fourth, we were told they didn't have any... We truly hope that you have not decided to stop "Purple and Orange". It would upset a lot of us.

Yours truly,

Robert Ziebell
Robert Marini
Mike Keller
Tom Novak
Jim Novak
Victor Baluczynski
Tom Gorski
Bob Oppenborn

Chicago, Illinois

No, gentlemen. We haven't decided to stop publishing "Purple and Orange". But remember, it takes a lot of time to put together something worth publishing. So please be patient with us. There will be a fifth issue, too!



KAREN PAULI

OTTER LIMITS PRESS

presents

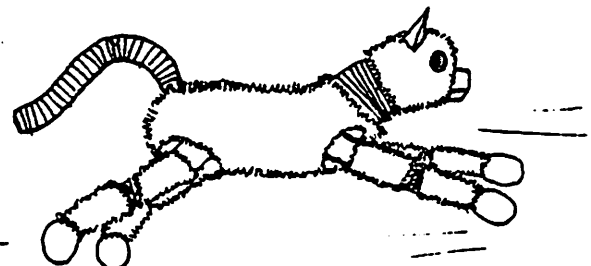
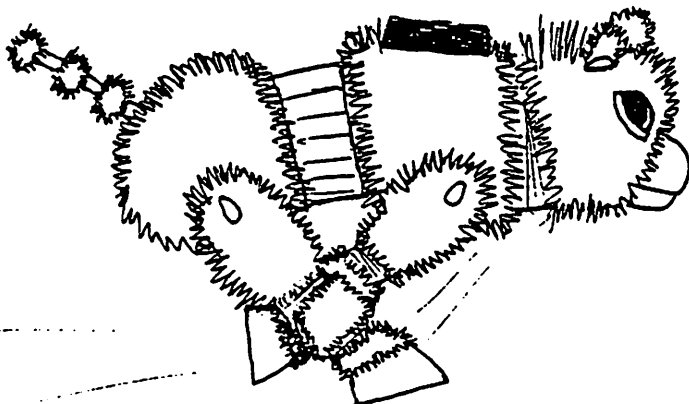
GRYFFON'S STAR. Fantasy and Sword and Sorcery zine. The first issue includes magic and Moon Elves, plus an interview with ELF QUEST's Wendi Pini.

LEGENDS OF THE LOST WEYR (and now for something completely different). Pern folk take note - a zine for fans of Pern interested in original fan prose.

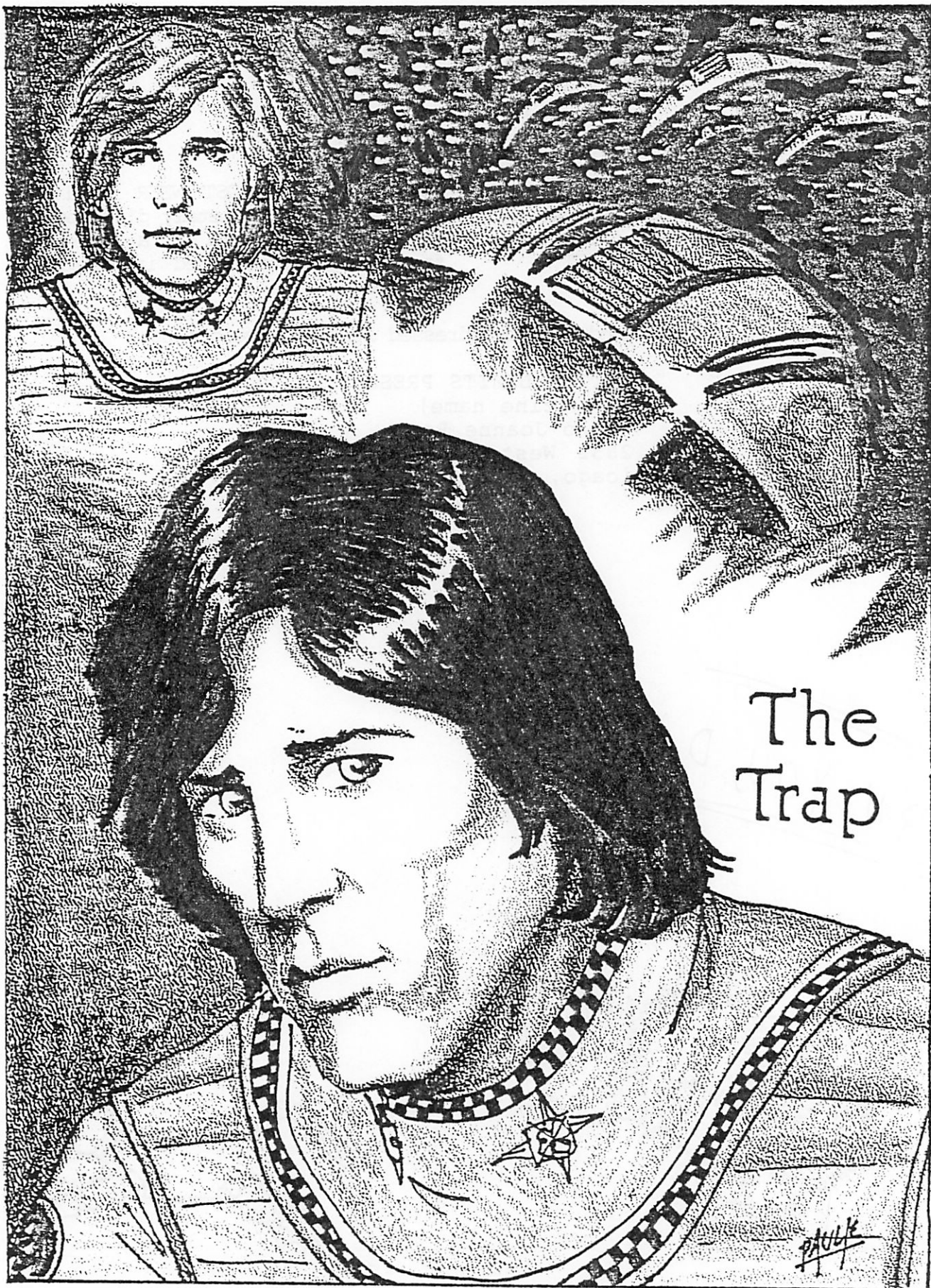
For information, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:

OTTER LIMITS PRESS
(zine name)
c/o Joanne Papin
2852 West Henderson
Chicago, Illinois 60618

DARN YOU, DAGGIT!!



Karen
Pauli



"The Trap"

(By Joy Harrison)*

Apollo climbed through the hatch and carefully sealed it behind him, effectively shutting out the noise of the GALACTICA's main thrusters. Turning, he climbed to the operator's console and activated the controls. He hadn't been in the old celestial chamber for quite some time; it was a relief to know everything was still functioning smoothly.

The dome's panels opened slowly, and Apollo relaxed in his chair, enjoying as always the view unfolding before him. "Like riding in the hand of God," he'd said once in an attempt to explain the way he felt. His feelings hadn't changed. Maybe, he thought as he gazed out at the stars, there'd be peace one day, and a chance to explore some of those stars. Deep star exploration was a dream he'd long cherished; perhaps one day that dream would be realized.

Reluctantly, Apollo turned from the star field, transferring his attention to the instruments before him. The scanner showed nothing. Well, he hadn't really expected another gamma frequency transmission...

He shrugged off the lingering hope of a signal from Earth and switched on the navigation equipment. Then he turned back to the stars. His thoughts seemed to drift aimlessly, focusing on nothing in particular. He felt very much at peace, with both himself and the rest of the universe.

There was no warning. Suddenly Apollo was surrounded by an entire Cylon attack force. Oh, he was still in the celestial chamber, still aboard the GALACTICA. But he could see swarms of Cylon attack ships, could even see a base star. It was like watching them on a scanner screen. He knew where he was, knew he was in familiar surroundings, knew he was aboard the battlestar that had been his home for years. But the Cylons were still there, seemingly inside the dome with him, close enough to touch. There were countless numbers of them. He felt as though, at any micron, they would see him...

Then, just as suddenly, he was inside the base star, watching and listening as a Cylon commander gave orders to one of his centuries. He could even hear the unmistakable droning voices...

"Our patrols are to remain concealed. No warning of our presence is to reach the GALACTICA. We will take the humans completely by surprise. They will be destroyed."

"By your command."

Then they were gone. The celestial chamber, its controls, the stars beyond the dome -- everything was as it had always been.

Apollo sat motionless for a long time, staring out at the stars. Then he shook his head. "Captain, that was one strange dream," he whispered.

But how could he have been dreaming, he wondered, if he hadn't been asleep? And he hadn't been, he knew. Was it possible to dream and still be awake? Apollo felt a sudden shiver of fear. If it wasn't some kind of dream... No! It had to be. Resolutely, he decided to call what he had seen a "waking dream". He turned back to his instruments.

* * * * *

Blue Squadron's quarters were deserted. Starbuck checked his chronometer and was surprised to discover it was still early. He could go back to the RISING STAR -- but as soon as the thought occurred to him, he dismissed it. Cassie could really wear a man out. Sleep was the order of the day -- or rather, night. He went to his locker and began stripping.

Someone entered, and Starbuck glanced back over his shoulder. "Hey, Apollo! I missed you on the RISING STAR. No one to play my conscience. Where've you been?"

"Celestial chamber."

The answer was spoken so quietly that Starbuck just barely caught it. That was odd. He turned to look at his friend. Oh, frak! Apollo was wearing that peculiar expression of his, the one that said something was bothering him. Well, Apollo'd just have to wear it the rest of the night; Starbuck was too tired to try to kid anyone out of anything just now.

* * * * *

Starbuck was luxuriating in being the first one awake. That didn't happen often, and the peace and quiet were a pleasant surprise. He stretched contentedly; then, very quietly -- because he really was treasuring his solitude -- he headed for the turbo-wash. He was nearly finished when Apollo entered. Starbuck looked him over with a judicious eye and was relieved to see no sign of whatever had been bothering him the night before.

"Seen what's posted yet, Apollo? When do we go to work?"

"We don't have to report for a couple of centars yet. Routine patrol, that's all. And, Starbuck, I have never seen you make it out of bed before me. Did Cassiopeia throw you out last night?"

"Last night was like fine, well-aged ambrosia, buddy. A little bit can carry you far." If Apollo could tease him, then he was in pretty good shape. Starbuck dismissed all thought of the previous night's uneasiness.

* * * * *

The two Vipers were nearly ready for launch. Apollo and Starbuck climbed into their cockpits, put on their helmets, and began their standard pre-launch checks.

Starbuck was going over his instruments. Another routine patrol -- three days in a row now. If he didn't love it so much, he'd be bored out of his mind. He patted his Viper's control panel affectionately, then glanced across the bay toward Apollo.

The Captain caught Starbuck's eye. "Ready, Lieutenant?"

"All set." He grinned, then added, "Sir."

Apollo was grinning, too, as he requested launch clearance. The command came back, "Launch when ready."

Starbuck's thumb came down on the control; he tore through the launch tube and found himself in free space -- alone.

Even as permission to launch came through, Apollo froze. Superimposed over his cockpit instruments, he saw the image of an entire Cylon attack force, swarms of fighters, a base star. Then he was inside the base star, watching and listening as a Cylon commander gave orders intended to lead to the destruction of the GALACTICA's fleet...

"Our patrols are to remain concealed. No warning of our presence is to reach the GALACTICA. We will take the humans completely by surprise. They will be destroyed."

"By your command."

Everything was exactly the same as two days before, in the celestial chamber. Exactly the same. Apollo stared at nothing, suddenly very much afraid. What was it? What was happening to him?

"Apollo? Apollo, what's wrong? We were cleared to launch microns ago! Apollo?" Starbuck was alarmed. Vipers had been known to explode on launch...

The worried voice penetrated Apollo's shock. He sounded almost normal as he replied, "Nothing's wrong, Starbuck. Let's go." His Viper hurtled down the launch tube and out into space.

Starbuck was waiting for him -- and frowning. There was that damned odd note in Apollo's voice again...

"Hey, buddy, how about taking in the triad game with me tonight? Cassie pulled a late shift."

"No, thanks." There was silence for several microns. Then, "Check your scanner."

Oh, Lords! It was going to be one of those patrols! Centars and

centars of empty space and cold silence. Starbuck experienced a momentary flash of anger; then the stars, the quiet, and the steady throb of his Viper calmed him. It wasn't long before peace became as real to him as the flight control in his hand.

For the next three centars, Apollo said nothing other than what was absolutely essential. He tried to concentrate on his instruments, to ignore the memory of that imaginary Cylon attack force, but he couldn't do it. His hand shook when he reached out to activate his scanner, and he honestly didn't trust himself to speak. He couldn't tell anyone, not even Starbuck, what he had seen -- or what he'd imagined he'd seen. Even Starbuck would think he was crazy.

Was that it? Had the strain of the past sectars finally been too much? Had he lost touch with reality to the extent that now he was seeing things that weren't there, imagining Cylons lurking beyond every star?

Apollo had to admit he was badly frightened. He'd never experienced anything like this before; he couldn't understand what was happening, and he certainly didn't know how to handle it. He only knew he couldn't tell anyone about it. So he flew the patrol in silence.

Starbuck was silent, too. He knew something was bothering Apollo, had known ever since their launch. And he knew that, for some reason, Apollo didn't want to talk about it. That worried him. So much had passed between the two friends -- so many secrets shared, feelings openly admitted, problems solved -- that Starbuck found it hard to believe Apollo wouldn't talk about this current problem of his. And the more Starbuck thought about it, the more he worried.

His disquiet grew along with the silence. Apollo wasn't usually very talkative -- but he didn't usually keep secrets, either, not from Starbuck.

"Apollo?" Starbuck broke the long silence between them.

"Mmm?"

"Want to tell me about it?"

For a micron, Apollo hesitated, tempted. But what could he possibly say? "About what, Starbuck?"

"Whatever it is that's bothering you. Maybe I can help."

"Nothing's bothering me, Starbuck."

Starbuck knew Apollo pretty well; and the tiny hint of anger, the minute hesitation in his friend's voice, warned him not to press. They also told him that, unlike so many other times, this time Apollo's problem would not disappear of its own accord.

Now Starbuck was really concerned. He wanted to help -- but how do you help a man who absolutely refuses to admit that anything's wrong? He was simply going to have to find out what the trouble was. Meanwhile, there really wasn't anything he could do until Apollo came to him.

Besides, he told himself, it probably wasn't anything too serious. Apollo sometimes let things get out of proportion. But Starbuck didn't really believe that -- not this time.

* * * * *

During the next few days, Apollo stayed pretty much to himself. The memory of his peculiar "visions" kept haunting him; he became more and more convinced that he was losing his sanity. There was no way he could tell anyone what he'd experienced; and since he knew his friends were concerned about him, he tried to avoid them rather than risk worrying them even more.

Fortunately, Apollo had no missions to fly during the section immediately following his second "vision". Unable to sleep, becoming increasingly tense and nervous as he brooded over his probable insanity, he realized he'd never be able to handle a Viper in any sort of stress situation. He wasn't even sure he could control his ship during a launch. He couldn't concentrate, couldn't think about anything but what he'd experienced. He began to spend a great deal of his off-duty time wandering the GALACTICA's corridors, ducking out of sight whenever anyone appeared.

In particular, he tried to stay away from Starbuck. The lieutenant had an almost uncanny way of prying the truth out of him -- and this time, Apollo was dreadfully afraid of the truth. If he hadn't been so badly frightened by what was happening to him, Apollo would have laughed at the irony of the situation. He was always accusing Starbuck of trying to avoid the truth; now it was his turn to hide from reality. He'd questioned his own sanity before, but never seriously. Now, however, there was no question -- no sane person saw or heard things that weren't there. And since he kept seeing and hearing things that weren't real...

For a frustrated and worried Starbuck, the situation was rapidly becoming intolerable. Apollo would see him coming down a corridor and would disappear before Starbuck could catch up. He would catch the Captain in their quarters, and suddenly Apollo would have urgent business elsewhere. A section of that was quite enough...

A troubled Boomer joined Starbuck in the Officers' Club. He had asked Apollo to watch him play triad. Apollo had agreed, but reluctantly -- and only after Boomer had insisted. Suddenly Apollo had bolted out the door, leaving Boomer staring after him, confused and somewhat hurt. Now Boomer wanted to know from Starbuck just what in Hades was wrong with Apollo. Starbuck fervently wished he knew what in Hades was wrong with Apollo.

Sheba appeared at their table. "May I join you?" Her voice was just a shade too high-pitched.

"Sure," Starbuck said. "Pull up a chair. What's up?"

"Starbuck, Boomer, I think you both know Apollo has become, well, pretty special to me." When the two men nodded, she went on. "In spite of that, you two probably know him a lot better than I do -- you've been a team for a long time." They nodded again. "So what in the name of the Lords is the matter with him?"

Starbuck pulled himself together with an effort. If Sheba, too, was worried about Apollo, things were even worse than he'd suspected. "What do you mean?"

"Starbuck, he won't talk to me. He runs every time he sees me. And if he does let me get within a hectar of him, he just sits and stares at his hands." She leaned forward and grabbed Starbuck's arm. "He's in some kind of terrible trouble. We've got to do something to help him!"

Starbuck patted her hand; his voice was soothing. "He gets like this sometimes. Leave him alone for a couple of days, and he'll get over it."

Sheba shook her head. "Thanks for what you're trying to do, Starbuck. But I don't believe you."

Starbuck didn't really believe his own words, either. Apollo had never been particularly outgoing; now, however, whenever any-one saw him, he seemed even quieter, moodier, more withdrawn than usual.

Preoccupied, Starbuck left the Officers' Club and headed for the launch bays. There shouldn't be anyone there just now, and he needed to think. He began pacing the length of his Viper, occasionally addressing it as if it were animate.

"Well, baby, what do we do now? I thought I might be making more of this thing than necessary, but if Sheba and Boomer are both worried, too, well... I've got to find out what's going on! That's all! I've got to! He can't just shut everyone out like this!"

Starbuck's pacing began to slow, as a look of grim determination spread across his face. "Apollo promised Boomer he'd go to the games tonight. That means only a red alert would keep him away." He addressed his Viper again. "Baby, tonight we're going to find out just what it is that's got such a hold on our Captain. One way or another, tonight's the night!"

An affectionate pat for the Viper, and Starbuck left the launch bay, his smile a set one of purpose.

* * * * *

When Sheba arrived at Blue Squadron's quarters that night, Starbuck and Boomer were both ready for her, waiting eagerly. Apollo seemed resigned; there certainly was no trace of excitement in his features. They took a shuttle to the RISING STAR.

Starbuck managed -- rather neatly, he thought -- to seat Apollo between Sheba and himself. "Come on, buddy. Relax. This promises to be an exciting game. Boomer's good, but so are the others." Starbuck leaned closer, conspiratorially. "I, uh, put a little wager on Boomer for you. You stand to win a bundle."

Apollo managed a smile -- not terribly convincing, but it was a smile. And when the game started, he found himself quickly drawn into the excitement of the contest. He forgot about the strange "visions", forgot about his fears -- at least for the present. He relaxed for the first time in a section.

Starbuck leaned back in his seat, smiling with satisfaction. He was certain he'd be able to get Apollo to talk; after all, the Captain was finally acting like himself again. Boomer was winning; Sheba looked happy; Apollo seemed to have relaxed and appeared to be enjoying himself. Just a little while, and they'd be finished with this whole rotten business! He turned his attention back to the game.

Boomer had just made a nearly impossible score. Apollo was cheering along with the rest of the crowd when suddenly the court, the players, the spectators all became a background for the Cylon attack force he'd already seen twice before. Even the words of the Cylon commander were unchanged.

"Our patrols are to remain concealed. No warning of our presence is to reach the GALACTICA. We will take the humans completely by surprise. They will be destroyed."

When Starbuck next glanced at Apollo's face, he saw all the tension, all the strain that had been there before. There was something else, too. He wasn't sure -- but he thought it was fear.

Apollo's eyes were glazed, focused on something no one else could see. His face was very pale, his breathing rapid and shallow. Starbuck nearly panicked -- Apollo looked physically ill. He turned to look for a med tech.

Just then, Apollo started to get to his feet, instinctively wanting to be alone. Starbuck spotted the motion, grabbed Apollo's arm, and pulled him back. "Sit down, Apollo," he hissed. "You look terrible. What's wrong?" He was thoroughly scared now -- Apollo actually looked close to collapse.

Apollo shook his head. "I'm all right," he answered, freeing his arm from Starbuck's grasp. Somewhat shaky, he stood up and left the gallery. Starbuck -- truly angry now -- followed, caught up with him in the corridor, and grabbed his arm again, spinning him around.

"All right, buddy. Now you're going to tell me what's going on."

"Nothing."

Apollo looked as though he were somewhere else. One quick glance at his friend's haunted eyes was enough; Starbuck's anger blazed.

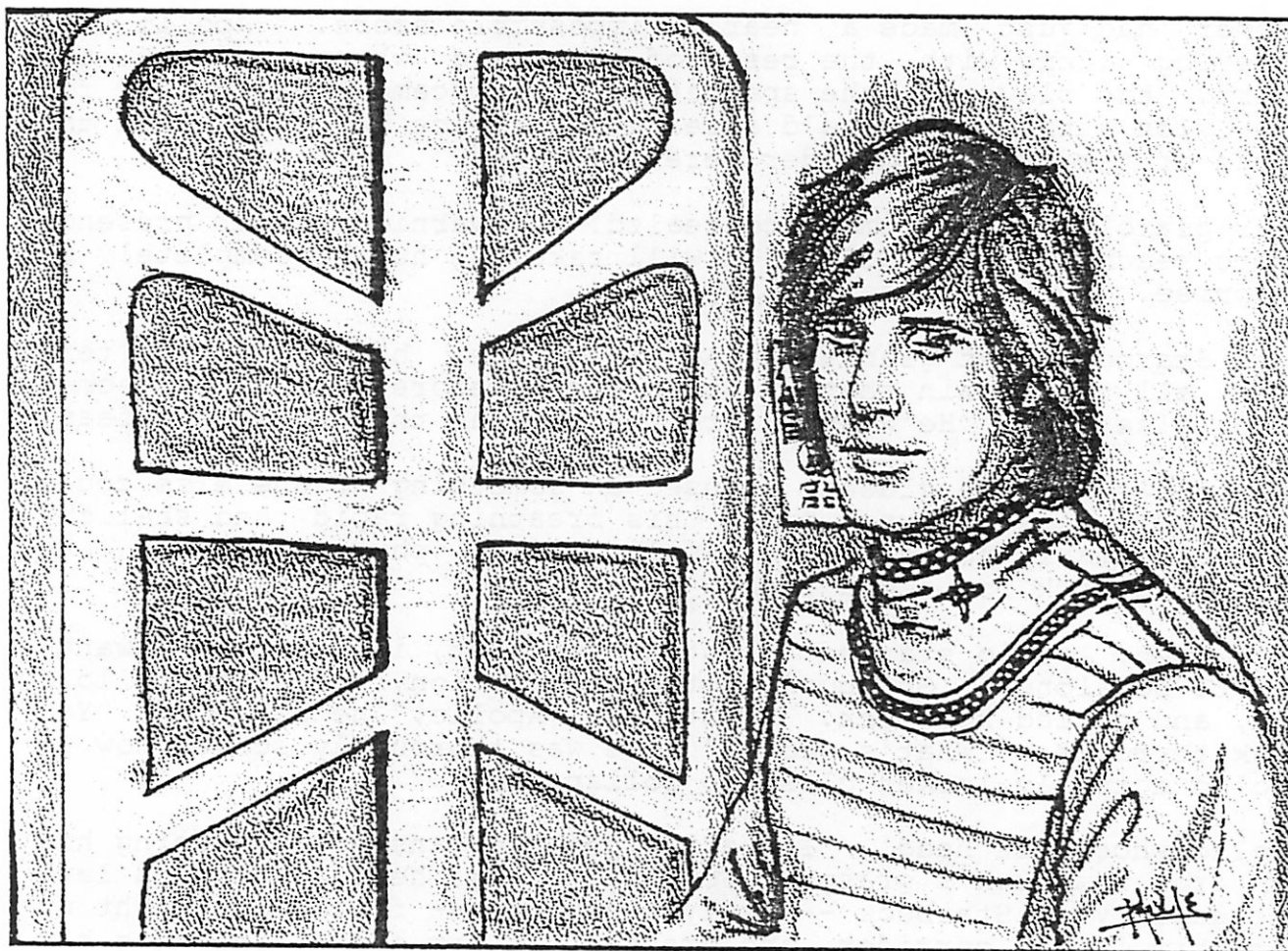
"Nothing? You've been acting strange for over a section, worrying Sheba and Boomer and me, and you say nothing's going on?"

Apollo shook his head wordlessly.

Starbuck stared at him for a micron, furious. There was only one thing left for him to do. Without another word, he released Apollo's arm, then turned and disappeared down the corridor. He headed straight back to the GALACTICA.

* * * * *

Starbuck hesitated just outside the door. He wasn't at all certain what he was going to say. How could he tell the Commander something was going on when he had no idea what that "something"



was -- and when he had no proof of anything?

When Adama bade his visitor enter, he certainly did not expect to see Starbuck. The young lieutenant had been nearly a part of his family for yahrens -- but Adama had never known Starbuck to seek him out privately, certainly not at this late centar. Even as Starbuck entered, Adama touched a button on his desk console. Yes, there was indeed a triad game aboard the RISING STAR; so why wasn't Starbuck there?

A little curious, but not at all displeased, Adama greeted his visitor with a faint smile. "Lieutenant Starbuck! To what do I owe the honour of this visit?"

Starbuck looked decidedly uneasy. "Commander." He clasped his hands behind his back and began pacing nervously back and forth in front of Adama's desk. He obviously had something to say -- and just as obviously, he didn't want to say it. That wasn't at all like Starbuck. Puzzled, Adama waited patiently for him to speak.

"Commander," Starbuck said abruptly, leaning toward him over the desk. "Something's wrong with Apollo."

Adama started ever so slightly. He hadn't expected an announcement like that. If anything was wrong with his son, why hadn't he been informed earlier?

Starbuck continued to speak, not noticing the reaction to his words. "I don't know what it is, Commander. But whatever it is, it's serious."

It must be, Adama thought, to bring Starbuck here. Those two usually solved their own problems.

"Can you explain that, Starbuck?" It was Apollo's father, not the GALACTICA's commander, who spoke, although Adama managed to keep his tone neutral.

Starbuck was pacing again, rapidly, nervously. He made a distinct effort to avoid Adama's eyes.

"Apollo's been acting strangely for over a section now. Have you seen him lately, sir?"

Adama shook his head. He'd been far too busy these past few days to have any time to spare for either of his children. He'd seen Athena on the bridge, of course. But now that he thought about it, he realized he hadn't seen Apollo at all. That was rather strange...

"He looks pale," Starbuck went on. "I almost called a med tech for him this evening, he looked so bad. He won't talk to anyone. He's run from Boomer and Sheba, and he avoids me like a Cylon."

Strange, indeed, Adama thought, becoming increasingly worried.

Starbuck was Apollo's closest friend. If he was actually avoiding Starbuck...

"We were on patrol a few days back, and, except for orders, he didn't say a single word for the whole damned patrol! Uh, beg pardon, Commander."

That's certainly not like Apollo, Adama was thinking. His son spent a lot of time with his own thoughts while on patrol, but not to talk to Starbuck? That was incredible! Adama actually missed Starbuck's "damned" -- and his apology for it.

Starbuck hesitated. He wasn't sure he should continue, but since he'd come this far... In a very quiet voice, he went on. "Then something happened to Apollo during the triad game tonight. Something that really shook him. I don't know what it was, but it shook me, too. I've never seen him like that, sir. He looked sick -- really sick."

"And you have no idea what's wrong?" Adama's voice was still neutral, his face carefully expressionless. His eyes would have given away his concern -- but Starbuck still wouldn't look at him.

"None, Commander. But it must be something pretty serious. You should have seen his face."

"I see. Thank you."

Starbuck knew a dismissal when he heard one -- and this happened to be one he was extremely grateful for. He hadn't liked going to Adama at all; but he knew, far better than many, that sometimes even a grown man needs a father. He headed slowly for the Officers' Club. The RISING STAR and the triad game held no more fascination for him tonight. Boomer would just have to win without him. And he was sure Boomer would understand...

Adama wished he could feel as relieved as Starbuck looked when he headed out the door. If Apollo was avoiding his friends, refusing to talk to anyone, something was very wrong indeed.

That remark of Starbuck's: "Something happened to Apollo during the triad game..." What, in the name of all the Lords of Kobol, could possibly have happened to his son during a triad game? Apollo wasn't easily shaken by anything. He was extremely sensitive, gentle when the occasion warranted. But he was also eminently practical. And he was one of the GALACTICA's most competent, most efficient officers. If something was wrong with him, the Commander wanted to know about it.

So did Apollo's father.

Adama checked his chronometer. The game would still be going on; those of the GALACTICA's Warriors not currently on duty would be aboard the RISING STAR. A computer status check revealed that Captain Apollo had returned to the GALACTICA. Therefore, this

would probably be the best time to find his son, talk to him, and try to learn what was amiss.

Adama started for the door, then hesitated. It wouldn't do to confront his son directly. Apollo was unlikely to appreciate being deliberately sought out and questioned; that was a sure way to keep him from talking. Their meeting would have to appear accidental.

The hesitation lasted only a micron. It was time, Adama decided, for the Commander to make an inspection tour -- and he would start with Blue Squadron. It was the most logical place to find his son.

* * * * *

Blue Squadron's quarters were quiet, deserted; Apollo had the place completely to himself. Returning from the RISING STAR, he'd considered shutting himself up in the celestial chamber, where he knew he could be alone; but the memory of what had happened to him there actually scared him, and after his experience just centons ago, he knew he couldn't face it again. He knew, too, that most of the Squadron was aboard the RISING STAR, watching Boomer; the others were on duty. And he desperately wanted to be alone...

Adama entered quietly, then paused to look around. Apollo was lying on his bunk with his eyes closed, but he didn't appear to be asleep. The Commander regarded him silently for several microns. Starbuck was right -- his son did not look at all well. His face was pale, haggard. And there was an almost tangible aura of tension, of strain -- even of despair -- around him. He looked physically ill.

"Apollo!" Adama filled his voice with surprise. "I didn't expect to find you here. I thought you were aboard the RISING STAR."

Apollo started; he hadn't heard anyone enter. "Father? What are you doing here?" He sat up.

Adama hid his concern -- Apollo really looked as though he were on the verge of collapse. He kept his face expressionless, kept all emotion out of his voice. "An inspection tour. I thought I'd check out parts of the ship while no one was around."

That, he thought, was one of the most blatant lies he'd ever told. But Apollo didn't even appear to notice, and Adama could no longer conceal his worry. "Is anything wrong?"

Apollo shook his head, not looking at his father. He wasn't very convincing. Adama sat down beside him.

"Are you sure? You look pale." Which was quite an understatement, he thought, as he put an arm around his son's shoulders. "It might help if you tell me about it."

"There's nothing to tell." There was a note of hopelessness in Apollo's voice.

"Nothing?" Adama was certain now that he knew better, that something was terribly wrong.

Apollo shook his head miserably, staring at his clasped hands. It would be so easy. And he wanted to tell someone what was happening, needed to talk to someone. But how could he? What could he say? He couldn't tell his own father that he was losing his mind...

Apollo's unhappiness, his desperation, were almost tangible. Adama could feel him trembling. His arm tightened around his son, drawing him closer. Apollo resisted for a micron; then, with a choked sob, he whispered, "Help me, father. Please help me!" He buried his face against his father's shoulder, crying brokenly. Adama held him tightly, reassuringly, stroking his hair and comforting him as he had yahrens ago, when Apollo was a small child.

What could possibly be behind this? What could be torturing Apollo so? Adama thought almost at once of Serina. But, no -- she had been dead for some time now; his son's tears for her would have been shed long ago, and in private. Adama sensed this anguish was born of something other than grief, but he couldn't even guess at its cause.

Still holding his son in his arms, Adama said gently, "Apollo, sometimes a problem can be easier to face when you share it with someone."

Apollo raised his head, met his father's eyes, and nodded slowly. Good, Adama thought; he's facing up to it -- whatever it is. With one hand, he wiped the tears from his son's cheeks. "Now," he said, his voice still very gentle. "Tell me what's wrong."

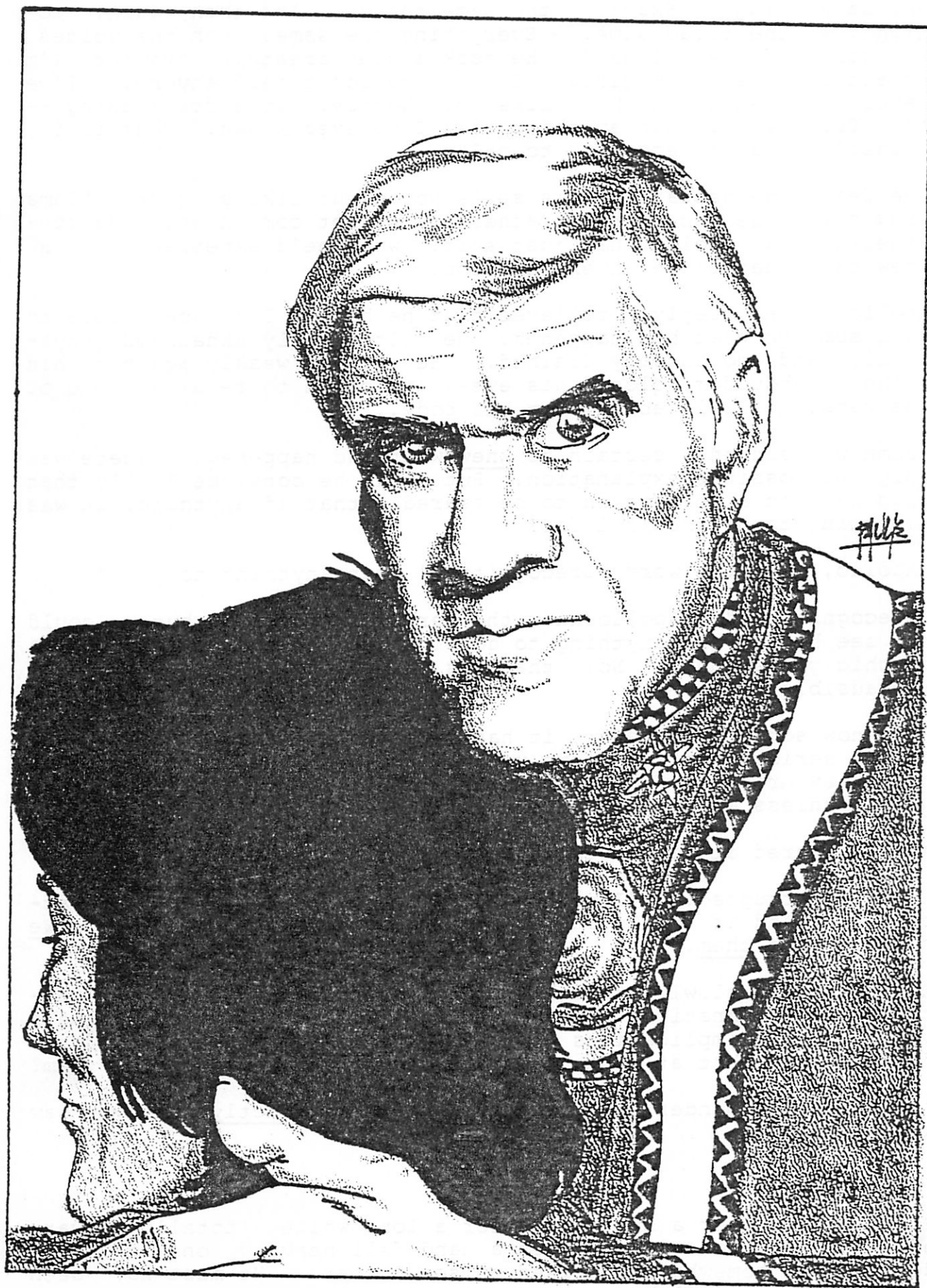
Apollo's voice was unsteady. "Father," he said hesitantly, in little more than a whisper, "I was up in the celestial chamber. And... And I saw something... Something that wasn't there. A... A vision... Cylons... An entire attack force, a base star. It was like watching a scanner. I heard them talking... It was about a trap for the Fleet... About destroying us... I... I thought it was a dream, but I wasn't asleep..." His voice trailed off. He was still trembling slightly.

Adama drew him closer again, until Apollo wearily rested his head on his father's shoulder. After several microns, Adama asked quietly, "And that's what's been worrying you all this time?"

"No," Apollo admitted reluctantly. "Not exactly. There's more."

More? "Tell me." It was a command now, not a request.

Apollo straightened, looked directly into his father's eyes. Now that he had begun talking, his voice sounded stronger, steadier. The words seemed to pour out. "A secton ago, in my Viper, I saw



the same thing. Exactly the same thing. And then again, tonight, at the triad game. Everything the same, even the voices, the words of the Cylons." He took a deep breath. "Father, I'm afraid I'm losing my mind. I... I couldn't tell anyone. I've never experienced anything like this before. It's frightening -- more frightening than anything else I've ever known. What is it, father? What's happening to me?"

The fear, the despair in his son's voice cut like a laser. Adama drew him close once more, father again, not commander. He considered what Apollo had just said, what he'd experienced. He knew there had to be an explanation...

Apollo sighed deeply, relieved that he had at last been able to tell someone what had happened. He felt utterly exhausted, physically and emotionally drained. He leaned weakly against his father's shoulder, closed his eyes, and began to relax as some of the tension slowly ebbed from his body...

Adama was suddenly certain he knew what had happened. There was only one possible explanation. But could he convince Apollo that this was not a phenomenon to be feared, that if anything, it was something to be thankful for?

"Apollo, does the word 'precognition' mean anything to you?"

"Precognition?" Apollo knew the term, of course -- but he could not see how it had anything to do with what he'd experienced. A psychic phenomenon? No; that was simply too far-fetched, too implausible...

"To know something before it has happened." Adama's voice was deadly serious. "I believe your 'visions' represent a precognitive experience, something that hasn't happened yet -- but will, unless we act to prevent it."

Apollo stared at him, totally bewildered. "But why? I mean..."

Adama interrupted. "I cannot explain it, Apollo. But I do accept it. And if the Cylons are setting a trap for us, perhaps we can surprise them."

Apollo nodded slowly, thoughtfully. Even if he didn't fully accept the explanation, he was at least willing to trust Adama's wisdom. The implications of his experience might still seem frightening, but at last he was confident he could handle them.

"Now," the Commander said crisply, "tell me exactly what you saw and heard."

* * * * *

Starbuck sat over a mug of ale for a long while, totally unaware of the passage of time. When a hand fell heavily on his shoulder, he was somewhat surprised to see Boomer. He must have been in the Officers' Club for centars...

Hair wet, obviously fresh from the RISING STAR and his triad game, Boomer pulled up a chair. "What happened?"

Starbuck stared into his mug. "I'm not really sure. Apollo left the gallery; I went after him. He looked sick, Boomer. And he still wouldn't talk. So I... I, uh, went to the Commander."

Boomer nodded silently. There was nothing more to be said.

* * * * *

Adama stood on the bridge of the GALACTICA, Apollo at his side. Long range scanners had just detected a solar system -- and it fit Apollo's description perfectly. Now was the time...

"Colonel Tigh, order the Fleet to change course, please. Mark delta five. Full scan."

Tigh looked surprised, but he obeyed instantly, without question.

"Bring the Fleet to full alert. Battle stations."

There was instant obedience -- and, with two exceptions, there wasn't a face on the bridge that didn't look at least as surprised as Tigh's. Adama remained completely expressionless; Apollo was impassive. They both appeared to know what was happening; and they both waited, studying a scanner.

Both on the bridge and in the launch bays, crew and pilots all assumed that this was just another battle stations drill; only Adama and Apollo knew differently. They continued to wait...

Long centons passed.

There it was! The Cylon attack force! Adama glanced at his son. Apollo looked more than just a little awed; it wasn't until now, when he actually saw the attacking Cylon ships on the scanner, that he really believed his father's explanation. How and why the precognitive visions had occurred were questions that might never be answered. It was enough that the Fleet had been warned -- and warned in time.

"Captain Apollo, you will take command of Blue Squadron. Prepare to launch."

"Yes, sir!" Apollo raced from the bridge, very much himself again.

Adama turned back to the scanner. He didn't have to worry about Apollo any longer; his son seemed fully recovered from his admittedly unsettling experience. His full attention could now be devoted to the Cylons, who were closing rapidly on the GALACTICA...

"All squadrons report ready to launch, Commander."

"Launch!"

* * * * *

Apollo jumped from the lift when it was still well above the deck; he was in his Viper before the lift came to a halt. And when the launch order came through, he was as ready for it as the rest of his squadron. He had no time now to think about precognition -- he was too busy actually living his visions.

"Blue Squadron, let's go to work!"

Starbuck hadn't seen the Captain in the launch area when the alert sounded, and he'd been worried about fighting Cylons with a sick pilot on his wing; so he was greatly relieved when he heard Apollo's voice. All the command was there; orders were crisp and precise as usual. At least Apollo's problem, whatever it was, didn't carry over into combat.

The Cylons didn't have a chance. Expecting to take the humans by surprise, they were unprepared for opposition. The ensuing battle was fierce. It was also very brief. The carefully laid trap had failed, sprung too soon, before the supporting base star could arrive. The Cylon commander would never know why he had failed; if told, he would not have understood.

By the time they had the Cylons on the run, something was really troubling Starbuck. That alert had been centons too early... And he was certain, somehow, that Apollo knew why.

That did it! Starbuck had taken just about all he was going to take. In fact, he'd taken more than enough. He was going to get some answers...

Immediately after touchdown, Starbuck headed for Apollo, fire in his eyes, his hands tight fists. "Okay, buddy. You're going to tell me what in Hades is going on around here, or I'm going to beat the answers out of you!"

The sound of Apollo's laughter made Starbuck blink and take a step back.

"I do believe you would, Starbuck. I do believe you would." Still laughing, Apollo clapped Starbuck on the shoulder. "Come on. I'll buy you a drink and tell you all about it."

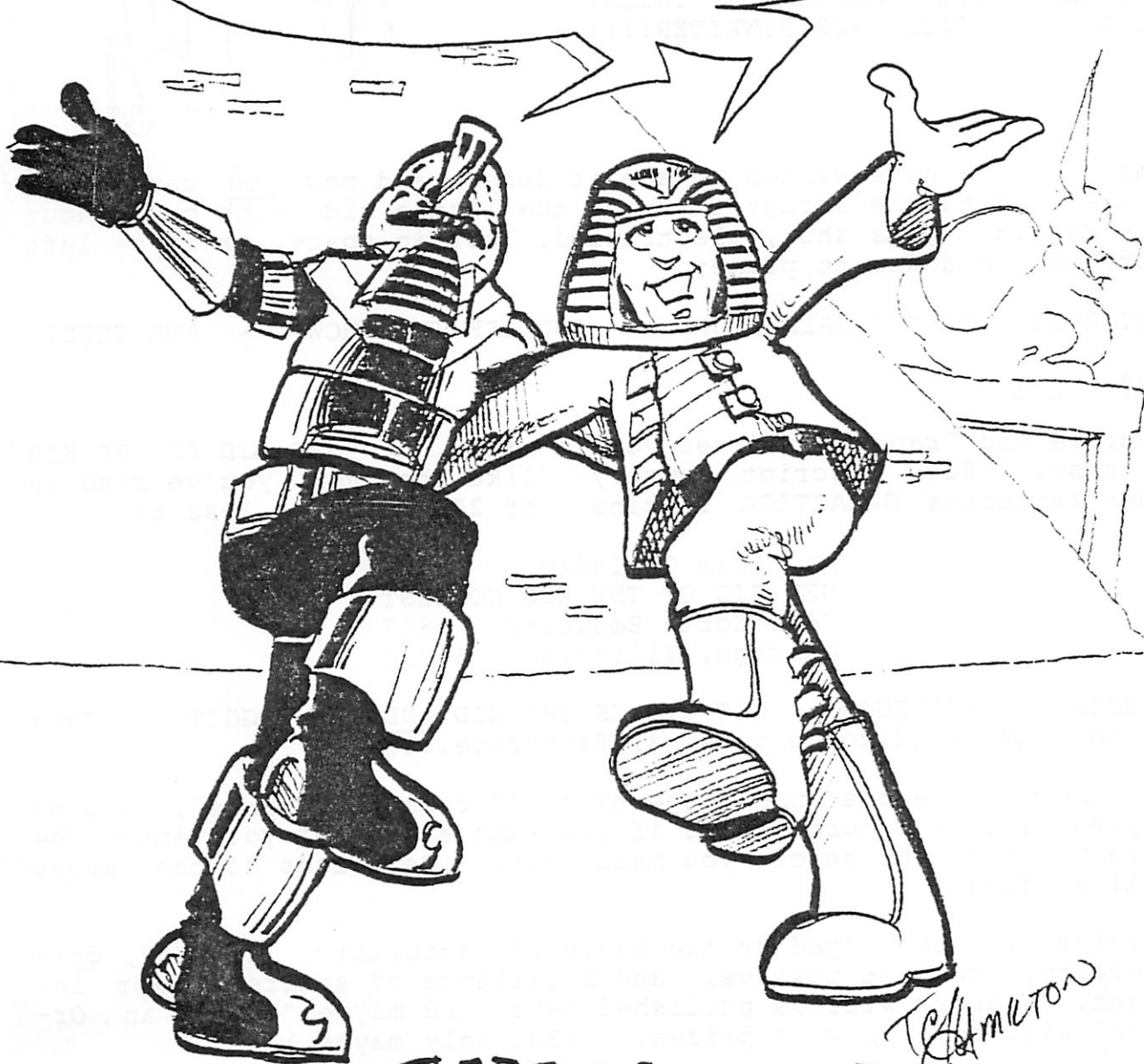
He started from the landing bay. Starbuck was still standing, bemused, shaking his head. Apollo turned and called back to him. "Come on, Starbuck. This is one story you don't want to miss."

"But... But how'd the Commander know about the Cylons? I mean, he was actually waiting for them!"

Apollo smiled. "It's very simple, Starbuck. I told him."

(*With special thanks to Pat for Starbuck.)

MY KINDA TOWN
CHICAGO
IS!



CHICAGO '82
CHICON III
P.O. BOX A3120
CHICAGO, IL. 60690

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

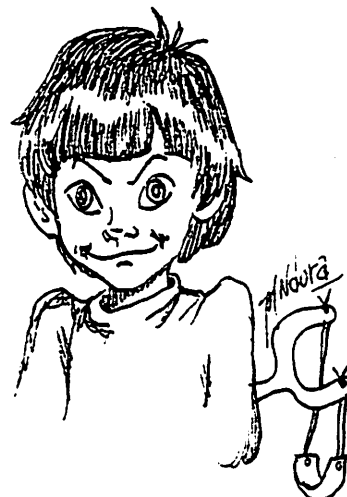
CONTEST!

CONTEST!

CONTEST!

IF YOU CAN GET RID OF THIS KID...

YOU MAY HAVE UNDEVELOPED TALENT
AS A GALACTICA SCRIPTWRITER!!!!



Many of you have wanted to see it done, and now you can do it! You can write the script in which the little kid (with or without his daggit) gets shot, electrified, lost in space, or maybe left for dead on a desert planet.

GET BOXEY OFF THE GALACTICA -- AND OFF THE SHOW -- FOR GOOD!!

Yes, you.

"Purple and Orange" invites you to enter our GET RID OF THE KID Contest. Send a script summary (like the ones you've read in your favourite GALACTICA fanzine) of 250 words or less to:

Ms. Lisa Golladay
GET RID OF THE KID CONTEST
7600 North Bosworth, #617
Chicago, Illinois 60626

SPECIAL SUB-CATEGORY: GET RID OF THE KID AND THE DAGGIT!! (This is the Humour Editor's personal favourite...)

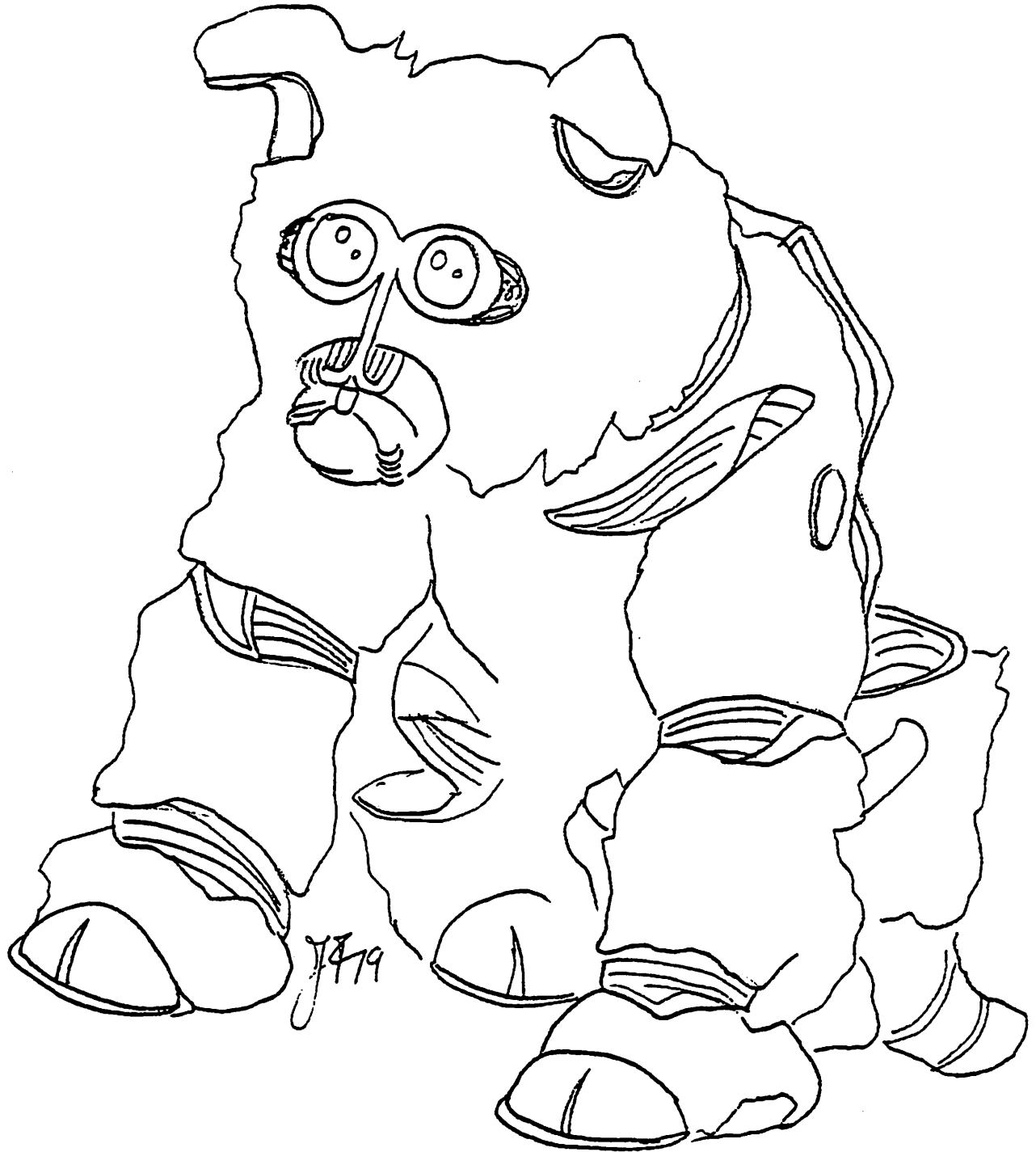
All entries become the property of "Purple and Orange", and no copies will be returned (so if you want a copy of your entry, be sure you have one before you mail it!). Decisions of the judges will be final.

Entries will be judged on the basis of legibility, literacy, originality, correct postage, and brilliance of satire and/or insight. Winners will be published here, and maybe "Purple and Orange" will come up with prizes. (But only maybe.)

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN 1 MAY 1980.

ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER ENTER
Please??

COMING SOON: Our all-new LOCK ATHENA INTO A CLOSET Contest!!



THE



BIRTHDAY PARTY

(By Pat Beese)

The ready room was festooned with streamers. The table that usually hosted a card game was covered with white cloth and heaps of food. The counter in front of the helmet rack was four and five deep with ambrosia bottles. Ale was cooling in a foot locker. And Blue Squadron was assembled.

All except Apollo and Starbuck. They were due back any micron, and Boomer was watching for them while Sheba fussed. At last he saw them coming and signalled for quiet. The lights went out. And Sheba prayed for the hundredth time she was doing the right thing; one never knew how Apollo would take a social occasion.

It wasn't that she hadn't been warned. Apollo himself once said he'd rather avoid public functions if he could. Boomer had said, "Don't expect any thanks." And Starbuck gave her a lecture lasting almost half a centar on why Apollo didn't like to be the center of attention.

But she'd decided to go ahead anyway, and Boomer and Starbuck had thrown themselves into the preparations for the birthday party with a vengeance. She'd almost broken into giggles, in fact, when she walked in on them unannounced and caught them talking like a couple of maiden aunts about decorations and food preparations.

Now it was too late to change her mind. In about five microns, she'd know how Apollo liked the idea.

Starbuck was having a bad case of deja vu. He kept seeing Apollo and himself walking to Apollo's bachelor party, and all the tragedy and near-tragedy that went with it. The fact that the lights were out in the ready room didn't help. He certainly hoped it was nothing more than an attempt at surprise.

"How come it's so dark down there?" Apollo wanted to know as he pointed down the corridor. "Where is everybody?"

Starbuck had started to mumble something about not knowing when the lights came up. Apollo was caught in the midst of a rousing drinking song and a throng of well-wishers. The surprise was total. Somehow, everyone had managed to keep the secret.

Apollo gave in graciously. With a smile, he accepted some ambrosia and allowed himself to be steered toward the food. Sheba had a bad moment when he asked who was responsible, but recovered quickly when he thanked her for remembering. Everyone was laughing and singing and having a good time.

Everyone except Starbuck, that is. For some reason, he felt down -- really down.

He moved to the fringes of the action and took out his lucky cards. They usually had an almost magic effect on him; today he didn't even open the pack. Replacing them with a sigh, he wondered what was wrong. He loved parties. He loved lovely ladies. He loved ambrosia, and good food (for a change), and a good time. And he especially liked seeing Apollo have a good time. So why the depression?

"Sheba tells me you're at least partly guilty of this trap, Starbuck. Thanks." Apollo raised his mug in salute.

"Yeah. It's okay, Apollo. Happy birthday." Starbuck responded with about as much enthusiasm as he managed to generate for a deep probe.

Apollo wanted to talk to him, to find out what was wrong, but he was dragged off by another well-wisher. It certainly wasn't like Starbuck not to enjoy a festivity, however.

Long after the party was over and the ready room back in its normal military condition, Apollo was still wondering about Starbuck's mood. It was so odd for fun-loving Starbuck to be unhappy at a birthday party...

"A birthday party? A birthday party! That's it!"

The next day found Apollo and Cassiopeia deep in strategy. Apollo knew most things about Starbuck, and one thing he'd never heard his friend mention was a birthday party. Apollo had never thought about it before; but how likely was it that an orphan, who didn't know his birthday, ever had a party? He and Cassiopeia were about to remedy that.

While Starbuck and Apollo were on patrol, the rest of the squadron, under the direction of Cassiopeia and Sheba, did an instant replay of the preparations for Apollo's party. An intense hush fell over the room when Colonel Tigh appeared at the hatch, so the "Corporal!" he bellowed seemed unnaturally loud. When the corporal in question appeared, carrying the biggest and most lav-

ishly decorated cake any of the crew had ever seen, the hubbub started up again.

Tigh actually looked a little embarrassed when Cassiopeia approached him. "I just wanted to say 'happy birthday,'" he mumbled in a voice that bore no relation to the one he used on the bridge. "I won't be staying."

By the time Starbuck and Apollo landed, everything was ready. The Colonel's cake held center stage on the table, and everyone was well-hidden. The "Surprise!" the squadron and guests yelled was just that. Starbuck jumped a metre.

Cassie came forward and placed a big kiss on Starbuck's cheek. "Happy birthday, Starbuck."

"But... But..."

Sheba followed with a wish of her own, and an equally big kiss.

Starbuck turned back to Cassie. "Are you responsible for this?" He didn't do a very good job of hiding the tears in either his voice or his eyes.

"No," Cassiopeia admitted. "He is." She pointed over his shoulder toward Apollo.

Starbuck turned to face the Captain. "You know, buddy, I never had a birthday party." He grabbed Apollo in a brief but intense hug. "Thanks."

Someone handed Apollo and Starbuck drinks, and...

And everything came to a screeching halt. Red alert. Drinks were dropped. Helmets were grabbed. Plates were tossed. Pilots were gone.

Cassiopeia sat down heavily. There were tears in her eyes. "He didn't even have a chance to have his party!" Then she took a deep breath, tossed her head, and ran to Life Center.

The battle raging outside the GALACTICA was fierce. The Cylons were so thick it was hard to miss a target; if you didn't hit one, you'd hit another.

And the GALACTICA herself was not without an opponent. A base star was moving in, and the battlestar was using maneuvers she hadn't needed in some time.

When the fray was finally over, Apollo and Starbuck met in the landing bay.

"Let's go back to your birthday party, Starbuck," Apollo said, leading the way. Colonel Tigh joined them.

"Damage?" Apollo and Starbuck asked simultaneously.

"Nothing serious, thank the Lords." Tigh sighed. "But I've decided I could do with a piece of that cake, if you don't mind a senior officer dropping in."

Starbuck grinned. "The more, the merrier, Colonel!"

The GALACTICA had used maneuvers she hadn't needed in some time, and the inside of Blue Squadron's quarters proved it. Everything that hadn't been nailed down -- and that included the food and drink -- was smashed.

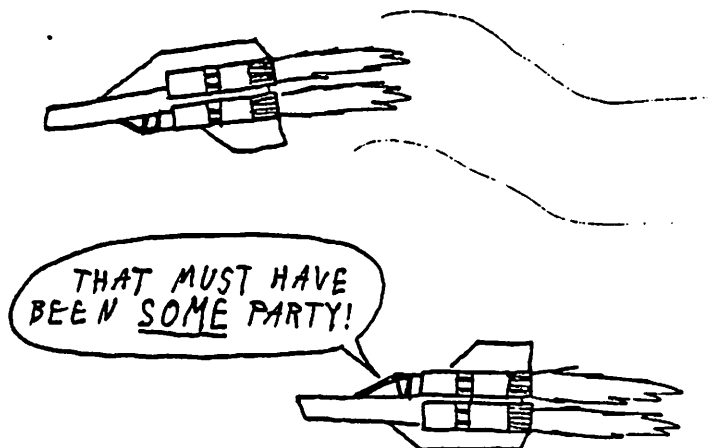
Cassiopeia entered just behind Starbuck, Apollo, and Tigh, and she let out a wail heard three decks down. All her hard work was ruined! Starbuck's birthday party was ruined!

Starbuck walked to the wall and wiped remnants of the cake off with his hand. Cupping a big fist full of frosting and crumbs, he turned to Tigh. "Did you say you wanted a piece of cake, Colonel?"

The general laughter following his question eased Cassie's fears that Starbuck would be as crushed as his party.

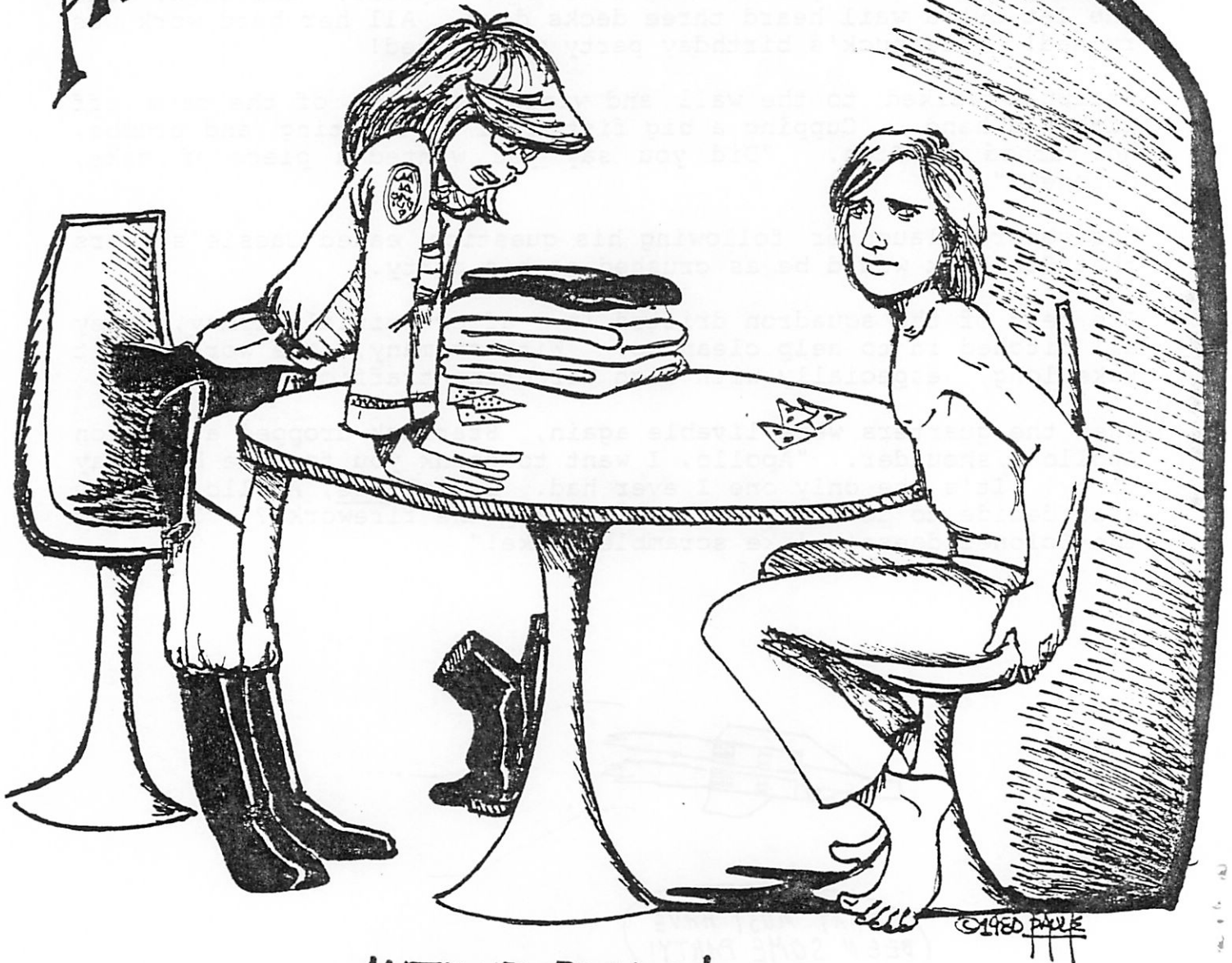
The rest of the squadron drifted in; after initial dismay, they all pitched in to help clean up. With so many, the work didn't take long, especially with Tigh directing traffic.

When the quarters were livable again, Starbuck dropped a hand on Apollo's shoulder. "Apollo, I want to thank you for the birthday party. It's the only one I ever had. But please, Apollo, if you ever decide to do it again, can we skip the fireworks? You know the Colonel doesn't like scrambled cake!"



KAREN PAULI

PANDORA'S BOX



ANTE-UP, BUCKO!

"Allies"

(By John Jones IX)

(Once there were the People, the reptilian race who created the robots called Cylons. When SHARER, a small scout ship of the People, came across the ancient SEGA-class liner, her crew was presented with a compelling mystery. What was a ship over three centuries old doing out in space, fifty light years from anywhere? The mystery deepened when the Cylon ship fired on SHARER without warning or provocation. In the brief battle that followed, the ancient liner was damaged. As it fled, SHARER's scanners analyzed the debris left behind -- and found traces of frozen air and water, two things certainly not needed on a Cylon ship. The liner must have been transporting some sort of life forms, and life forms aboard any Cylon ship this far out...

(SHARER closed in on the drifting debris, seeking an answer to the mystery of the Cylon ship.)

Urun let Pilot and First Technician Gelbo (Harsh) Dan steer SHARER toward the drifting debris left behind by the damaged Cylon ship. He headed toward the south pole of an arbitrarily-defined sphere in space, which should keep them out of the predicted path of any pieces large enough to damage the scout's hull. Urun wanted the sensors at maximum sensitivity, and activating the shield again would block most of them.

As SHARER closed the range, the sensors continued to give the same readings: air and water, now freezing solid; chunks of metal, all of previously recorded types; a limited amount of radiation from ionized particles sprayed into space by SHARER's disruptor bolts. At the same time, Urun was also keeping an eye on the long-range scanners' tracking of the fleeing Cylons. The ship still had her normal-space drive wide open, but wasn't moving as fast as Urun would have expected. Of course, it had been so long since anyone met a SEGA-class liner in space that he doubted if their top speed was even recorded in the data files! Still, if the fleeing Cylons couldn't go any faster, SHARER could catch them easily enough. If they jumped to stardrive, it would be another matter, but it would be nearly half an hour before they could do that without the radiation burst being detected.

Now they were making visual contact on some of the larger pieces of debris. Urun was about to order the shield up when Makra Dakal suddenly stiffened at her console.

"Nai! Biomatter readings!"

Urun's mouth opened, but nothing came out except a hiss of breath. Then, "Alive or dead?"

"No life signs yet."

"Good." It was enough of a surprise that there'd been living matter aboard a Cylon ship, normally as sterile as an asteroid's surface. Urun suddenly realized he didn't want to encounter a life form which could survive a disruptor bolt and explosive decompression, even if it was no more than a form of fungus!

Was he getting too cautious for a scout pilot? A few years ago, he would have seen the chance of meeting such a durable life form as an exciting challenge. Now, though...

Now, he was older, with a short-handed and poorly-maintained ship. A few years ago, his eagerness would have made him a better scout, one determined to try to solve any riddle even at the price of his life and ship. Now, it was as much a part of his duty to bring his ship home as it was to solve mysteries.

It also didn't help that a few years ago he didn't have any friends, and now he had three who could all die with him if he was eager at the wrong time.

"Nai, shall I close on the biomatter?" asked Dan.

Urun nodded, realizing he'd been mentally gathering shirga's eggs while there was work to be done. "Keep the shield down. Makra, time for a tractor beam."

"Yes, nai," both crewpeople responded.

SHARER was now moving toward the drifting biomatter hardly faster than an atmosphere flyer. Urun stared at the screen as if he could increase its magnification and resolution by sheer willpower. In theory, it was possible to clamp a tractor beam on an object and pull it aboard purely by sensor readings, without visual contact. In practice, it was always wiser to do it by eyeball.

A slight surge of acceleration made Urun give at the knees, as Dan matched velocities with the biomatter without bothering to compensate inside the ship. Then Urun straightened, as SHARER came to rest with respect to her target. On the screen, they could now pick out the individual objects in the clump of debris -- several segments of hull plating, a long strip of deckboard, a length of pipe with cable trailing from either end, and...

The drifting body was bipedal and either pale-skinned or clothed in white. Distance, perhaps also injuries or decompression, hid other details. Very certainly, though, it wasn't a Cylon, and it didn't seem to be a member of any species Urun had ever heard of being associated with the Cylons.

"Tractor the body aboard," he said. Makra's fingers played with



the tractor-beam controls. A blue glow surrounded the body, and it began to move toward SHARER.

"Careful!" he snapped. Makra didn't take her eyes off her work, but the stiffening of her back told him he'd sounded nervous. Well, he was. Dead bodies couldn't be slammed around like chunks of metal.

"Open Hatch Two," said Makra. Dan flipped a switch, then gently swung the ship until the open hatch lay more or less in the direct path of the approaching body. It grew larger, until Urun could see hair and sense organs on the head. It went off the screen for a moment, then came back as Makra switched to the pick-up outside Hatch Two. The grab unfolded from the deck inside and stretched out into vacuum until its claw closed on one leg of the body.

Makra held it there while they all looked at it. It was slightly shorter than the average for the People, a good deal shorter than the Cylons. The proportions were roughly the same as the People's, although the arms weren't double-jointed, and there was no sign of a tail. One hand had lost its glove, revealing five digits with horn plates toward the tips, but with no proper claws.

The head was bare. Urun counted two eyes, two external ears, an external nose with two nostrils, and a wide mouth showing a herbivore's teeth and smears of dried blood. He saw other features, typical of warm-blooded life forms -- a soft, scaleless skin and abundant hair, mostly on top of the head.

The body was clothed from neck to ankles in a grayish-white one-piece garment and thick-soled black boots. The garment showed stains in half a dozen colours, and seemed to be thicker around the groin and joints. Various hooks and fasteners on the torso and around the waist seemed designed to support equipment.

Sapient or non-sapient? Urun found non-sapient hard to believe, even if that garment was provided by the Cylons. Why should they go to that much trouble to clothe an animal? And if it wasn't an animal...

"Get it -- get him -- inside, and pressurize the lock," Urun ordered. "Then run the picture through the computer."

"Do you really think this is anything we've met before?" asked Humo.

Urun didn't. He'd given the order largely to cover up the fact that he didn't know what else to do. Before he had to answer Humo, though, Makra shouted.

"The SEGA's slowing down!"

Urun looked at the scanner readings. No doubt about it, the Cylon ship was rapidly losing speed. This could mean she was get-

ting ready to jump into stardrive. It could also mean any one of half a dozen other things, some of them dangerous to SHARER, all of them needing investigation. Suddenly Urun wasn't worried about too much or too little eagerness. He was only worried about the Cylons getting away and taking the rest of the mystery with them.

"Close the outer hatch, but don't pressurize the lock," he said. That way, if damage opened a passage between the lock and the interior of the ship, air would flow from the ship into the lock, and no bacteria or toxic materials from the body would get into the ship. At the same time, the out-flowing air would not carry the body out into space.

Makra's fingers danced. "Gelbo, full speed after the SEGA." Light patterns chased each other across the power board, and the starfield twisted as SHARER maneuvered to clear the debris. When the sensors showed clear space all around them, Dan fed in full power.

"Makra, do we have two ready-checked suits?" She punched for a readout, then nodded. "Good. Get them, two hand disruptors with heavy powerpacks, a translator, and anything else you may need to do readings from inside a suit."

"You're going to board the Cylons?" asked Humo.

For a moment, and not for the first time, Urun wished Humo's egg had fallen off a high cliff and splattered on the rocks below. The Weaponer was always saying the right thing at the wrong time. He shrugged.

"If they'll let us, certainly."

"And if they won't?" Makra asked.

"Then we'll see what we can do about getting aboard on our own. Remember, they fired on us without provocation. The law's on our side."

The other three nodded, and Urun hoped he'd put more confidence into his words than he felt inside. If there was one thing certain in this lonely corner of space, it was that the law would be little use and less protection in whatever they would face aboard the Cylons' ancient starship. After seeing the dead alien, Urun knew that as certainly as if the words had been carved on the bulkhead in front of him.

Then what will help us?

The answer came -- Your own wits. The same as before. What else do the People have left?

(To be continued.)

EDITORIAL - "A First"

It's never happened before. A television series, cancelled by its parent network, actually taken off the air -- then, only a few months later, brought back again, by the same network. The name's different, and most of the cast. The basic premise is changed. And no one can say the new show takes itself too seriously these days. But GALACTICA 1980, beneath all its humour and its new names, behind all the new faces, is still BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. And we, all of us who've fought to get it back, have won a major victory, something even the multitude of STAR TREK fans couldn't do. We've forced a major television network to admit they may have been wrong, may have been premature about cancelling a series.

We've won. Haven't we?

Or is what we've won a Pyrrhic victory, won at the cost of everything BATTLESTAR GALACTICA was and could have been? Have we paid too high a price?

With Earth found (only to be abandoned again for her own safety?), with the original characters gone (but surely not dead!), with time travel and invisibility and Boxey grown up (to be the new hero) -- can BATTLESTAR GALACTICA ever be the same?

Can it?

You've seen it. GALACTICA 1980. You tell us. Is it any good? Can it survive? Does it have the potential of the original series? It is a series pilot, you know. And maybe, just maybe, the series will be scheduled by ABC-TV. But is it worth it? Write and let us know your opinions. We'll be happy to print your comments. We're waiting to hear from you.

And while we're on the subject of waiting, here's something for you to think about. We've had many people come up to us and say they like "Purple and Orange", say they want to see more of it, and more often. But we, the staff, are too few for what you seem to want of us. Where are you, who say you want this zine, when we ask for articles, stories, poems, art, letters? Where are you when we ask for help? We can't do it without you.

We need to hear from you, our readers. We need to know what you like, what you don't like, what you want more of -- or less of. Our staff includes people of many talents -- but none of us is telepathic. And we can only do so much.

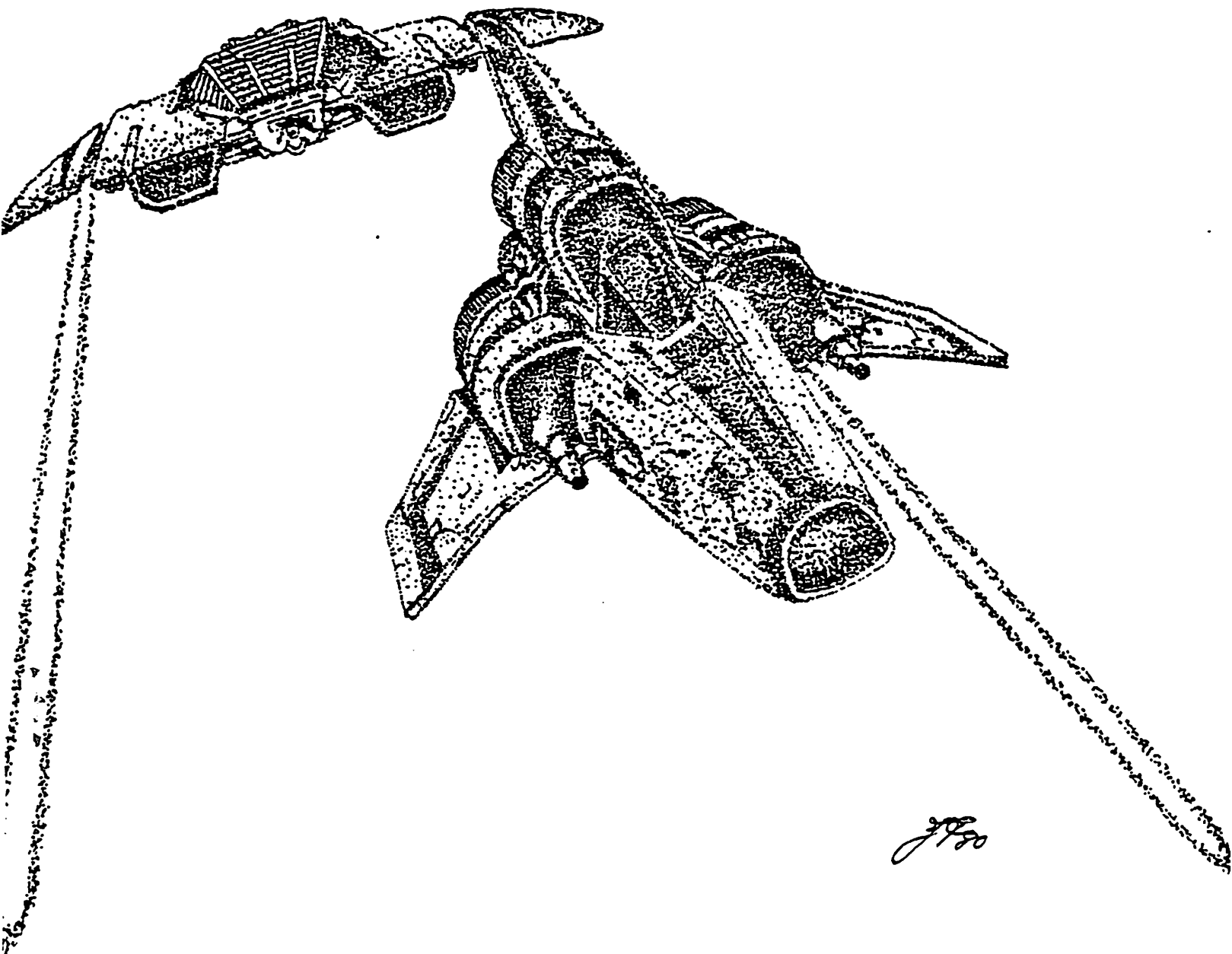
So, please, let us hear from you.

--- Joy Harrison
Senior Editor

A TELEVISION FIRST!

"Purple and Orange" is happy (we think) to be able to make the following announcement.

On 14 February 1980, ABC-TV officials in New York and Los Angeles confirmed that GALACTICA 1980 has been scheduled as a regular television series, to begin either 16 March or 23 March 1980, at 6:00 P.M. (CST). Ten episodes have been ordered, to fill out the network's "second season".



"PURPLE AND ORANGE" STAFF

Publisher.....Battlestar OSIRIS
 Senior Editor.....Joy Harrison
 Editor.....Pat Beese
 Assistant Editor.....Ben Thomas
 Humour Editor.....Lisa Golladay
 Art Editor.....H. P. Benedict
 Instigator.....Leah Bestler
 Publicity.....Paulie Gilmore
 Todd Hamilton
 Layout/Paste-up.....Bob Beese
 Typist.....Kyri de Morgan
 Assistant Typist.....Syene Syana
 Proofreaders.....Dick Gaynor
 Rosita Rothenberg
 Artists.....Bob Beese
 Steve Casey
 Cheryl Whitfield Duval
 Jim Fritzsching
 Linda George-Himber
 Todd Hamilton
 Karen Pauli
 Paulie
 Special Consultants.....Dr. Steve Brandt
 George Breo
 Pat Kasberger
 Frank Prohaska

PURPLE AND ORANGE
 c/o The New Fantasy Shop
 5651 West Belmont Avenue
 Chicago, Illinois 60634